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IN THE SEA OF ICE.

By ALBERT J. BOOTH.



Tom saw that the first three men were rapidly approaching. "This way, miss," cried the lad, hurrying Jessie up an opening in the masses of ice. "Once we get in sight of the bark, there'll be more show for us."

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IN THE SEA OF ICE.

By ALBERT J. BOOTH,

Author of "Red Light Dick, the Engineer Prince," "Fred Frost, the Young Arctic Explorer," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

"TELL ye what 'tis, boys, I don't like the looks o' things, 'nd it's my 'pinion that we'd better get out o' yer kind o' sudden. Them clouds up yonder ain't ter my likin', 'nd 'sides that, the glass has a bad look. She ain't a-falling exactly, but she's kind o' clouded an' riled up, like 's though things wasn't 't all pleasant, 'nd I donno but we'd better be turnin' tail on the Arctic an' let well 'nough alone."

The speaker was Captain Sam Carter, of the whaling bark Seagull, of Nantucket, then in the Arctic Ocean finishing up a pretty good season, and being on the point of turning about and seeking warmer seas in which to pursue his calling.

Cap'n Sam, as he was universally called, so that now none but his most intimate friends knew what his full name was, most people being ignorant of it, was a jolly old sea dog, a thorough seaman, an efficient commander, and a man who probably knew as much about the northern seas and their dangers as any man in the business of whale-catching, in which he had been engaged, man and boy, for more than forty years.

The words reported were spoken as soon as the skipper made his appearance on deck one cloudy morning, and their correctness was not to be denied, for both sea and sky had a bad look, and boded little good to the vessel who would brave too long the perils of this far-away ocean.

Away in the distance could be seen the coast covered with snow and ice, and on either hand were huge fields, broken masses and solid bergs of the same cold, glittering substance, the long lanes of water lying between these masses being the only means of getting out of this frozen sea.

Let these lanes be once choked with the pack ice—let one of these great bergs become grounded, and attach itself to the loose floes, and thus bar the passage out, and the unlucky ship imprisoned here would run the chance of being imprisoned for many weary months, if not destroyed by the surging floes, whose force is almost past belief.

Cap'n Sam knew all this, for he had had many a narrow escape from just such dangers, and it was no wonder, therefore, that he was somewhat alarmed and began to think that it was high time he got away, while he could do so with a whole skin.

The plans that men make are frequently changed, however, by what seem mere trifles, or at least by events not at all out of the common, and so it was destined to be with Cap'n Sam and the trim little Seagull.

It was scarcely half an hour after the skipper had come on deck when George Underhill, a young fellow of about twenty-two, and who acted as harpooner in the "old man's" boat, being then snugly ensconced in the crow's nest at the mainmast head, shouted down to the skipper:

"There's something coming toward us, sir. Looks like a big bowhead whale traveling alone. He hasn't spouted yet, but I don't think I can be mistaken."

"Ye haven't got a glass, have ye, George?" asked the skipper.

"Yes, sir, but it's clouded over and I can see better without it."

"Guess I'll come up 'nd take a look myself."

He had barely gone up half a dozen ratlines, however, when there came a ringing shout from above.

"Ay, ay! there he is, sir. There he spouts! A big fellow, too."

"How far off, George?"

"Four or five miles, sir, and coming this way, down the lead. Maybe we'd better lower

for him before he gets in among the loose ice, for then we'll lose him sure."

"So we had. Come down, George. Ship-keeper, go up to the masthead with yer flags. Clear away the starboard boat there. Guess ye'd better come, too, Mr. Hook," to the mate.

"Ay, ay, sir. Get ready the larboard," shouted the mate. "Lively it is, now."

Down came George from the masthead, being greeted with a smile as he reached the deck by Jessie Carter, the pretty daughter of the skipper, the young lady having often accompanied her father on his voyages.

The boats were quickly cleared, the men putting in the line tubs, boat and lantern kegs, oars, mast, harpoons and other necessary appurtenances, and then, when everything was ready, two men were stationed at the falls and the order given to lower.

As the boats descended from the davits the crews jumped in and took their places, the ropes were cast off, and almost as soon as they touched the water they were skimming away over the waves, each pulled by five sturdy oarsmen, the officer sitting in the stern and steering.

Down the watery lane went the two boats, the captain's leading, as is customary, all hands pulling with a will, for the air was sharp and cold, and exercise was necessary to keep the blood in circulation, despite the fur coats, hoods and mittens worn by the men.

After half an hour of this work, the skipper, glancing ahead, said, in a hoarse whisper:

"Aha! there he is still blowin' and tumblin', an' comin' right for us. Pull steady 'nd easy, boys, and don't make too much noise, 'cause we might gally him, 'n' then he'd go to Ballywhack afore we'd catch up to him agin."

The skipper spoke in a sharp, short manner, clipping off all his words to their smallest possible proportions, so that one had to pay the closest attention to tell what he was saying at times, though, upon the present occasion, there was no mistaking him.

The whale had not been seen from the time of lowering until now, although the men knew that he was still in sight from the vessel on account of the flag at masthead, which was still flying, and which would have been hauled in had the monster sounded, that is to say, gone under.

George cast a look over his shoulder as he pulled upon his long oar, and saw the whale throw up a spout of vapor, which was quickly condensed into water, and fell into the sea with a splash.

"He's a big fellow, isn't he?" he said, quickly. "Good one to wind up the season with."

"Pull steady and easy, boys," again cautioned the captain, and it was a necessary warning, as whales can hear to a great distance, and often the lowering of the boats or the rattling of the oars in the rowlocks will cause them to take fright, and either turn and swim away at a great speed or sink out of sight.

When a whale sounds it is not always easy to tell which way he will go, and he may keep right on in his course, or turn upon it and go in any direction, not appearing again for half an hour or more, and perhaps then come up in an entirely different quarter from the one expected.

The men pulled a long, steady stroke, making no unnecessary noise in dipping their oars or in lifting them from the water.

On came the huge cetacean, one of the most valuable of all the different species, now spouting, now lashing the icy waves with his

great flukes until his wake was one mass of foam, and now rolling from side to side in play, though still pursuing an onward course.

As both he and the boat were approaching one another, the distance between them was rapidly diminished, and at last the captain whispered to his harpooner:

"Better take in your oar, George, an' get yer iron ready. I'll put ye right head on to him, so's he won't see ye, and ye'll have the best chance in the world."

George drew in his oar and laid it along the thwarts, and then, seeing that the harpoon had been spliced to the nearest line, poised the pole in his right hand, put his knee in the chock at the bow, and stood facing the approaching leviathan with a look of determination upon his handsome face.

As they were directly in front of the monster, they could not be seen, whereas, had they approached him at an angle on either side, his small eyes would have detected them, and, taking the alarm at once, he would have fled, for whales never attack a boat or a man swimming in the water unless they have first been assailed.

George grasped the pole of the sharp iron firmly, the men pulled with a will, and presently peaked their oars at a sign from the captain, while the young harpooner braced himself for the effort.

Whizz! went the harpoon through the air, striking the great head of the monster and sinking deep through blubber and flesh.

The tremendous creature gave a start, lashed the waves with his enormous flukes, and made a dash for the boat.

"Stern, all!" yelled the captain, swinging the little craft around with his long steering-oar. "Stern, stern, stern!"

The men backed water with a will, knowing that if once the great marine animal, whom they had so rashly attacked, should strike the boat, it would be dashed into a hundred pieces.

Forward pressed the leviathan, smarting with pain and spouting blood and vapor, but around swung the boat, the line paying out rapidly until they had passed the dangerous region of his flukes and were fast falling behind.

The animal paused for an instant, as though looking for his enemy, and then dashed ahead in the direction of the ship.

This had given the captain a chance to make a double turn of the line around the logger-head, or stout post in the stern, and checked the speed of the whale, who was now forced to tow the boat, instead of reeling off fathom after fathom of the line and leaving the boat behind.

The skipper now went forward in order to kill the whale as soon as he had been tired out, while George took his place and steered whenever it became necessary to alter their course.

The mate now quickly dashed up, having put his boat upon one side as the whale came speeding along and a second iron was quickly hurled and fastened in the monster's body, just back of the hump, one of the best places to put a harpoon in all the length of those gigantic creatures.

The line was quickly made fast, and then both boats were towed swiftly through the lap of water, one on each side, the whale going like the wind, and vainly striving to escape.

As they passed the vessel, at a safe distance, all hands ran to the rail to look at the chase, and the skipper roared out, in stentorian tones:

"Put 'bout an' foller us, Mr. Hawser. Reckon this yer feller'll tow us clear down to the Atlantic afore he stops."

Smarting with pain, both irons having entered so deeply that there was no pulling them out, the monster kept on his mad way, lashing about with his tail, one blow of which would have shivered both boats in an instant, while the men peaked their oars and sat watching their prey and waiting patiently for him to slow up.

The Seagull was put about, following the two boats like a great bird, just keeping them in sight, and being at hand when the chase should end and the men return.

One, two, three hours, the monster continued to dash ahead, never giving the boats a chance to pull up on him, that the captain might finish his work, but still dashing on, as though with the intention of going from pole to pole before he paused in his mad course.

CHAPTER II.

"WELL, this may be exciting enough for once," muttered the stroke oarsman of the captain's boat, as he filled and lighted his pipe, there being nothing to do just then, but let the bowhead tow them until he got tired, "but it ain't what I was cut out for."

"What was that?" asked George, who, it will be remembered, was now in the captain's place at the helm, the stroke being directly in front of him.

"What was it? Why, an actor, to be sure. Old Booth used to tell me often, when I was but a stripling, that I ought to go on the stage. Ah, that's where I missed it. Shades of Booth, Forrest, Kemble, Macready, Barry Sullivan, David Garrick! What a falling off there was when Jack Spratt left the stage to turn sailor, and a poor one at that."

"Sailors is all werry well in their way," growled Joe Williams, who pulled the tub oar.

"Ah, yes, but an actor! Think of his fame, his fortune, and his sacred honor, as Rolla says to the Peruvians. Why, I remember when young Les' Wallack went on the stage of the Old Bowery in New York; he didn't have any better chance than I, and now look at him. Look at Kean, and Davidge, and Ben Webster, and Buckstone, and Davenport. They all had less chances than I, but they improved 'em, while I—well, if ever a man missed his vocation, I did."

"Well, ye kin do yer best in this un," retorted Jenkins, the midship oarsman. "Anyhow, you ain't got a name for an actor. Who'd want to go and see Jack Spratt act out? They'd laugh at ye."

"Ha, ha! I would make the name so glorious did I but once don the sock and buskin and tread the boards, that men would forget its absurdity. You never heard me recite, did you? Well, I'll give you Mark Antony's address to the Romans, from the divine's bard's immortal masterpiece of Julius Caesar. Listen:

"Friends, Romans, countrymen!
Lend me your ears.

I come to bury Cæsar, not to—"

"Haul in a little of that slack there!" cried the captain at that moment, and Jack Spratt Antony's oration came to a sudden termination.

The leviathan had slowed up a little, and now all hands laid hold of the line and drew in a dozen or twenty fathoms, George holding the turn, so as not to let any of what they gained get away from them.

The mate also succeeded in getting considerably nearer, but neither of the boats could draw up close enough to get a lance or an explosive bomb into the animal and so finish him.

The lines were made fast again, as the whale suddenly put on a spurt and darted ahead, dragging boats after him at a speed that made the water foam and bubble around their bows and dash the spray over them at times.

Having relighted his pipe, when they were once more idle, and puffing away in silence for a few moments, Jack Spratt resumed:

"Ah! to think of being on the same stage with Booth, Bennett, McCullough, or Jim Wallack, even if you didn't do more than carry a banner and hear that splendid oration—

"Friends, Romans, countrymen!
Lend me your—"

"Take your oars, boys!" cried Cap'n Sam, suddenly. "I b'lieve the beggar's gittin' tired. We'll haul up on him 'nd give him a taste o' cold steel. That's what he wants."

Jack Spratt sighed, took up his oar and forgot that he might have been in a different line of life if he had only stuck to it.

He pulled a long, steady, powerful stroke, which his companions could easily follow, and as fast as they gained on the whale George drew in the slack and made it fast.

"Never mind making fast, George," said Cap'n Sam, after about twenty minutes of this sort of work. "Just draw it in and put me alongside."

Then, grasping the long pole of the sharp steel lance firmly in both hands, Cap'n Sam arose and stood ready, while the men pulled with a will and George steered him right alongside the whale, which now lay quiet.

Deep into his head the skipper plunged his keen weapon, drawing it in and out like the dasher of a churn, drawing blood at every stroke.

The huge creature roared and rolled and thrashed about, but Cap'n Sam, shod with spiked boots, leaped upon the slippery back of the monster, and driving the lance clear in up to the end of the shank into his vitals, let out his life and brought the conflict to an end.

There was one last flurry, during which the monster struggled in the greatest agony, and then he turned slowly over upon his side—Cap'n Sam leaping into his boat—and lay dead upon the waters.

Securing the huge carcass by towlines and floats, so that it might not sink or drift away, the boats awaited the coming up of the bark, when all hands scrambled aboard, the boats were hauled up, the dead whale secured by chains passed around his head, body and flukes, and then, while those who had been engaged in the chase went to their dinners, the rest attended to the work of cutting in, preparatory to boiling out, the vessel being brought to, the sails furled, and the wheel lashed, so that they lay almost idle upon the waves, merely drifting with the tide.

It was now considerably after twelve o'clock, and the unfriendly appearance that sea and sky had borne in the morning had by no means improved, the sun being now obscured and the wind blowing freely, so that as the pieces of blubber were thrown upon deck and cut up, they were fairly covered with frozen spray, which by no means added to the comfort of those who had this work in charge.

"We'd better git her out of the way while we can," observed Cap'n Sam, "and not trust to stowin' the blubber away and trying it out arterward."

The fires were lighted under the pots that night, although all the blubber had not been cut from the whale's carcass, but as all hands were set to work, one gang cut off the blanket pieces, reduced these to horse pieces, and passed them over to the mincers, to be prepared for the pots, while another tended the fires, kept the pots going, filled the deck casks from the coolers, and passed the oil below in great copper buckets to be put in the casks.

The light from the fires, and occasionally from the chimneys too, when the former were built up too fiercely, the clouds of black smoke that floated off to leeward, the forms of the men hurrying to and fro, the creaking blocks, the surging waves, the songs of the men at the windlass, the calls of the boilers—all these sights and sounds made up a scene that in weirdness could scarcely be equaled.

All night without a rest the men worked with a will, all hands being engaged, from the cabin boy who turned the grindstone to sharpen the spades, leaning knives and mincers, to the mates, who presided at the pots, even the cook and steward not being excepted, no, nor Cap'n Sam, who worked harder than any one.

The immense head, with its "case," from which gallons and gallons of clear oil was taken out by bucketfuls, being too large to hoist on deck, was cut up and bailed out overboard, the carcass was cut away as fast as the blubber was stripped off, the bone of the mouth—one of the most valuable parts of the whole animal—was secured, and at last, when morning dawned, there remained nothing of the huge creature that had given them such a chase, except what was on deck and down below in the casks.

The fires under the pots were still going, and would continue to do so all day and night as there was still many barrels of blubber to try out, and the work must not cease until it had been finished.

Matters were looking dubious, however, for behind them the ice had closed in and spread out in a broad, glittering sheet as far as could be seen, while in front the lanes of water had decreased both in number and width, and several huge bergs had moved up, which had not been in sight the day before, and which now threatened to close the path and keep the vessel imprisoned until the spring.

"Just look at me," muttered Jack Spratt, in a tone of disgust, as he stood rubbing down his bare body with a bunch of oakum, to get the oil off, some of his companions having already turned in for a nap of a couple of hours. "What a difference between this life and the stage! Ha! it vexes my soul."

"You might play Mazeppa or the French Spy," said George, with a laugh. "You've got just about the right costume, a little less, perhaps, than tradition speaks of, but then, you know, your favorite, Antony, is supposed to be naked in the first act."

"Ah, yes, that reminds me. You didn't hear me spout that speech:

"Friends, Romans, countrymen!
Lend me your ears.

I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him.
Have respect for my honor.

And be patient that you may hear
The evil that men do lives—"

"Below there!" called out the second mate. "You'll have to turn up in an hour. There's more to do up here than you think."

"Go to sleep, Jack," said George; "you didn't get it right, anyhow. I used to speak that piece in school, and know it by heart."

Jack Spratt, the disappointed tragedian, concealed his chagrin as best he might in sleep, and about two hours later all hands were again called and part of the watch on deck went below to sleep until dinner.

By night, the greater part of the work had been done, and as the way was still clear, the vessel drifting slowly down the channel, it was deemed safe to continue it, the night being divided into two watches of six hours each, one-half of the crew working while the other slept.

George was on duty the first half of the night, and when he turned in some little sail was set, the vessel going at an increased rate and keeping well in the middle of the channel, out of the way of the drifting ice.

Somewhere about four o'clock, for it was still dark, a tremendous crash was heard, and then there came a shock which was felt from one end of the vessel to the other, all hands being awakened in a moment.

Confused cries were heard upon deck, and George, hurrying on his clothes, scrambled up the ladder at full speed, followed by his companions.

An immense iceberg had turned over, jammed the floe right under the vessel's keel, and now held it as tightly as though it were a part of the berg itself.

CHAPTER III.

At that time neither Cap'n Sam nor his officers could determine the full extent of the damage done, it being so dark, and there being no means of making an investigation.

All they knew was that the vessel had ceased to move, that the ice pressed under and around her, holding her as though in a vise, and putting a complete stop to all motion on her part.

The sails were useless, and they were taken in and snugly furled, in order that they should not freeze solid or the blocks become clogged with ice and refuse to move.

There was some blubber yet to be boiled down, but as nothing other than this could be done for the present, the men who had turned up at the first alarm were now sent below again and the others continued the work.

In the morning the decks were cleared of rubbish, the hatches secured, the try-works covered over and everything restored to its usual condition, the vessel looking as neat and clean as though just leaving port.

The condition of affairs was found to be as had been supposed the night before—that is, an immense mass of ice had forced itself directly under the vessel throughout its entire length, raising it bodily from the water, and yet holding it upright, as in a cradle or dry dock, other masses of ice having then pressed in on both sides, until within a foot or so of the deck level.

A thorough investigation below decks showed that none of the ribs or beams had

been broken or warped, no planks started, no seams opened, and no damage done to the keel.

The pumps sucked as soon as they were tried, showing that there was no unusual amount of water in the hold, and that there was no danger to be apprehended from that quarter.

The Seagull had been simply lifted into a cradle of ice, but in that condition she was as useless as though she had sunk in five hundred fathoms of water.

They were caught fast in the floe, imprisoned in the sea of ice.

With the prospect of a long and cheerless winter before them, the necessity of lying idle when they might otherwise be at work, with the danger of shipwreck awaiting them when the ice should finally break up, it may well be imagined that the feelings of Cap'n Sam and his crew were none of the pleasantest.

Pretty Jessie Carter did much to cheer up young George Underhill, for she told him naively that now he would have more time to attend to her, as there would be much less work than formerly, and that they might spend any number of happy hours reading, singing and conversing with one another.

"Well, it ain't so bad, seein's we took that last big feller," said Cap'n Sam, in a philosophic tone. "He'll make a good hund'ed an' fifty ba's an' 'bout forty hund'ed o' bone, an' that ain't so bad, wi' what we are already got. I kin 'ford to lie idle all winter wi' sich a cargo aboard."

"But my chances for returning and fulfilling my destiny by going on the stage, for which the elder Booth said I was so well adapted," lamented Jack Spratt, "are still delayed and made vague and unreal. Did you ever hear me recite Hamlet's soliloquy, George?"

"No, and I'd rather see Ham let alone just at present."

"Aha, a pun, the lowest form of wit. Let me recite Mark Antony:

"Friends, Romans, countrymen,
Lend me your ears."

"No, thank you," interrupted George, with a grin. "I need them myself just at present. Anyhow, your own are good enough, and would grace any donkey, regarding size, that I ever saw."

Now that they were doomed to remain in the ice for several months, the best thing that they could do was to make the bark as comfortable as possible, draw up some plan of action for the health, comfort and amusement of the crew, provide themselves with proper clothing, food and other et ceteras, and, in fact, take every precaution towards defending themselves against cold, hunger, disease and *ennui*, the most formidable foes that men placed in such a situation as theirs can have.

On the second day after the accident there was a heavy fall of snow, lasting steadily for thirty-six hours, but when it had ceased all hands built a solid wall of snow all around the vessel, from the level of the ice to a height of six feet above the rail, leaving an arched opening at each side from which to go out upon the ice, for Cap'n Sam had laid it down as an inviolable rule that the men were to take two hours' exercise upon the ice every day, unless the weather was too inclement to permit it, in which case it could be taken on deck or below, according to the weather.

The wall of snow kept off the wind, made the hold much warmer, and rendered the decks a pleasant promenade, when it would have been extremely disagreeable to walk on the ice on account of the fierce wind, which at times cut with the keenness of a knife.

A week passed in comparative comfort, when one day Cap'n Sam, Mr. Hook, George, Jack Spratt, Jinkins, Williams, the cabin boy, and one or two others started off across the ice to look for bears or other animals, tracks having been seen in the light snow near the vessel that morning.

The party were armed with guns, harpoons, axes, and pikes, and all were as warmly dressed as possible, being clad in fur boots, trousers, and coats, with hoods to draw over their heads, and thick mittens to protect their hands.

They kept together for some distance, the flag flying from the crow's nest showing them the position of the ship, but at last they separated, George and Cap'n Sam following the

tracks of a bear, which they had suddenly seen in the snow.

"Reckon he's a big feller, George, from the size of his feet. Is yer gun all right?"

The young fellow replied that it was, and then they continued following the tracks, which after some time led across a large level field of ice beyond the bergs and bordering upon the pack ice, as near as they could judge.

Suddenly they caught sight of some white object moving slowly across the ice at some little distance, and Cap'n Sam at once pronounced it to be a bear.

Grasping his weapon more firmly, George set out upon a run, so as to intercept the animal, which appeared to be making for a cluster of snow-covered rocks or ice hillocks, among which he might have a cave where he would be safe from the young man's attacks.

As George cut off his retreat and approached, gun in hand, he stood on his hind feet and uttered a fierce yell, at the same time advancing with rapid strides.

There was another sound heard at the same time, though George was too busy to attend to it or give it more than a passing thought.

It was like the report of a cannon, and when it occurred, the level ice might have been seen to heave in many places, and appear to be moving as well, while several thin jets of water were thrown into the air, the spray freezing as it fell.

George knew that after his first shot he would have no time to reload, and that, therefore, that one must be effective, or his own life would pay the penalty of his carelessness.

On came the bear, George remaining firm and immovable, the piece half raised, and his eye fixed steadily upon his four-footed antagonist.

Suddenly there came that dreadful sound again, and this time George felt the ice tremble beneath his feet.

There was no time to retreat now, for the bear was almost upon him.

Again came that strange report, and then George heard the captain's voice in tones of awful warning.

On came the bear, and the young man, throwing his weapon quickly to his shoulder, took quick but careful aim and fired.

The ball penetrated just below the fore shoulder, reached the heart, and stretched the huge animal dead at our hero's feet just as it was about to spring upon him.

"Never mind the bear, George!" screamed the skipper. "The ice is breaking up!"

Another report, followed by half a dozen in quick succession, now ensued—the ice rocked and tossed like a ship in distress; huge jets of water spurted up in all directions, and George was thrown down by the violence of the shocks.

When he arose a terrible change had taken place.

A sudden change of wind, the tide, the increased pressure of the ice pack, or some other cause, had disrupted the field, which had lately been so unbroken a level, and it was now a mass of floating cakes of various sizes.

The larger masses, grinding against the smaller, reduced them to a powder; the swiftly running current drove others under the floe and before long a wide stream separated the youth from his companions, while beyond could be seen a wide expanse of open water, whither he was rapidly drifting and where they could bring no help.

The vessel was far away, still fast in the ice, the shore ice was likely to break up still more, and so put it further out of the power of his friends to aid him.

The carcass of the bear lay on the ice, with his gun beside it, and both were unheeded now.

His friends ran along the edge of the firm ice, looking for some spot where there might be a temporary ice bridge on which he might cross, but finding none.

Falling upon one knee, the poor fellow extends his hands in supplication and calls upon his friends to save him.

Alas! they cannot; and even now the ice upon which they stand is beginning to tremble, and they are forced to fly precipitately, lest they, too, should share his fate.

He kneels upon the ice, and raising both hands, looks up into the pitiless sky in silent entreaty, and thus they behold him as he is borne rapidly out upon the tossing waves,

and the heavy mists came down, shutting him from their sight.

CHAPTER IV.

AWAY and away, borne by the ice-laden current, our hero was swept out upon the wide ocean, far from the sight of his friends on the brink.

Whether his prayer would be answered, He to whom it was addressed alone could tell, but certain it was that the poor fellow seemed beyond all earthly help.

The night was coming on, and as the cake of ice drifted beyond the reach of vision of Cap'n Sam and his mates, George sat down on the carcass of the bear and thought long and earnestly upon his situation.

The light had faded, but there would be a moon later on, and even now the intense whiteness of everything about him gave a sort of reflected light which enabled the young fellow to see better than he might otherwise have done.

He could easily distinguish objects near at hand, and he saw that there were no larger cakes or any bergs in the way, and that there was, therefore, no immediate danger of the cake running into any other, thereby endangering his safety.

He was warmly clad, but having no chance of exercising himself and keeping up his circulation, there was danger that he would finally succumb to the cold unless he took some means to induce extra warmth.

One idea frequently suggests another, and this thought brought to George's mind the bear upon which he had been sitting so long.

Kneeling by its side, he took out his sheath-knife which had been ground to a fine edge, and proceeded to remove the hide, which he intended to use as an extra covering.

He could not perform the job as nicely as he would have liked, as the carcass was already cold, and except where he had been sitting was frozen.

By dint of perseverance and plenty of good work, however, he at last succeeded in removing the skin, and, holding it up at arm's length, he saw that it would more than cover him, and would most effectually keep out the cold night air.

Wrapping himself up securely in the great skin, with the hairy side toward him, he lay down upon the ice, curled up comfortably, and was presently fast asleep.

Some time during the night he was awakened by a rude shock, and, hurriedly arising, found that he had struck against a larger cake, but had rebounded, and was now floating along in a sort of a channel between two immense floes, which stretched away as far as he could see.

"If I could only get over to the solid ice, I might possibly reach the bark again," he thought, "as I know the general direction I ought to take."

He was not near enough to jump, and he did not care to swim, preferring to wait a little longer and trust to his chances.

Now and then he would bump into a cake or small berg, but always swung off again before he could tell whether it would be advantageous to leave his cake and go to another, or whether by so doing he could reach the field of ice.

Once or twice he might have done this, had he been a little quicker, and he therefore determined to keep awake and watch his chances.

At last, however, the lead seemed to grow freer of floating ice, and, being drowsy, he again rolled himself up and dropped off into a doze, which was not disturbed for many hours.

At last he aroused himself and found that the day had well advanced, and that he was still afloat, and, furthermore, that there was no chance of reaching the firm ice for some time to come.

The lead was not straight, often taking a sharp turn and sweeping around the field-ice in a great bend, the cake keeping in mid-stream, and so prevented his landing.

He spent another night on the ice, but on the next day he ran into the floe and landed, taking with him the bear skin and several pounds of bear meat which he had cut off with his knife.

He managed, by cutting well into the carcass, to get some of the flesh that was not frozen as hard as the rest, and this he ate, finding that, raw as it was, it greatly strengthened him.

Throwing his gun over his shoulder, and

fastening the skin and flesh of the bear upon his back, he trudged wearily on for several hours in the direction in which he judged the vessel lay.

An immense berg in front of him served as a guide, and keeping this in sight, he pushed on until at last he reached its base.

He had been long attracted by a strange appearance at the top, and now he saw what caused it.

A ship, caught in the ice, had been lifted bodily by the forcing of floe pieces, one under the other, and, by the constant expansion and crowding in of the ice, had been carried up by degrees to a height of more than two hundred feet, being plainly visible for a long distance.

Its shape was clearly discernible, and one of its masts, now sheathed in ice and standing like a gaunt finger pointing to the zenith, still remained.

The sides were white and glistening, though the shape was clearly outlined, so that it was perfectly evident to George that it was a ship he saw, and not the fantastic creation of the frost king.

Where there was a ship there might be shelter, and George determined to make his way up the face of the berg and explore this gloomy relic of bygone days.

The berg was not sheer, but was cut here and there by winding paths, projecting ledges and deep recesses, so that one might, by persistent effort, succeed in reaching the top.

Slinging his gun across his shoulder, George began the ascent, clinging to every point that afforded any hold for hands or feet, and gradually working his way to the top.

Occasionally he would slip, or some point of ice upon which he depended would break under his weight and put him back.

Once, when more than half way up, he lost his hold and fell a distance of thirty feet, bruising himself severely, but fortunately breaking no bones.

He met with many mishaps, and often had to make his way along a narrow ledge for several yards in order to go around some sheer perpendicular mass that barred his upward progress.

The higher he went the colder it was, although, as he was on the sheltered side, it was not as bad as it would have been had he taken the exposed side.

Up and up, wearily but patiently, he made his way, until at last, dragging himself up by the ice-covered chains, he reached the rail and let himself upon deck.

It was covered with snow and ice so deeply that none of the planks were visible, and this was the case with the mast, rail, bowsprit and house on deck.

There was a high poop aft, and here were the doors leading to the cabin all sealed with the seal of the icy hand that had imprisoned the ship here and laid its imprints upon all things.

Great icicles depended from the overhanging deck, and one of these had forced open one of the doors and completely barred the passage leading below.

The outer door seemed ready to fall, and throwing himself against it, George burst it in, and found himself sliding down the steps leading to the officers' rooms.

Reaching these, he found a number of skeletons, dry and crumbling to dust, lying upon the floor in a corner, while the general look of decay which pervaded the whole ship told him that it was many years since the vessel had been imprisoned here.

On a beam running across the top of the main cabin were cut deep into the wood these words:

"SHIP ICE KING, 1760."

"That's more than a hundred years," muttered George. "I wonder how long she has been up here?"

In a smaller cabin where there were more skeletons—or rather the dust of them, for they had long crumbled out of shape—upon the sideboard of one of the bunks some one had cut with a knife in quaint, old-fashioned characters:

"Timothy Goldsmith, 2d mate of ye shippe Ice King, sayled f'm London, March ye 19th, 1769. Caught in ice November ye 27, 1781."

"Nearly a hundred years ago," said George. "I knew she was an old-timer by her build. Well, she'll afford me shelter, I think, and now let's see what I can do for a fire."

There was an old rusty stove of very antique

pattern set up in the main room, and George now broke up some of the doors, pulled off the sides of one or two bunks, broke them over his knee into good-sized pieces and piled these into the stove.

Then with his knife he cut up a lot of splinters and shavings and placed them under the large pieces, setting the whole on fire with a match—for he was provided with several cards of these very useful articles, and soon had a merry blaze going.

The fire roared, and snapped, and crackled, and by degrees the cabin became much warmer, although had there been a thermometer there it would have been seen that a pretty good degree of cold still prevailed.

It was warm by comparison, however, and, being sheltered, was quite a welcome spot, George piling on more wood as the sticks burned down and formed a glowing mass of coals in the bottom of the stove.

After having warmed himself thoroughly and filled the stove up with wood, in order that the fire might not go out, George loaded his gun and went out upon deck to look around.

Three or four large birds, of a variety unknown to him, were flying overhead, and, raising his gun, he brought one down, the others taking alarm at the sound of the explosion and sweeping away on their broad pinions, uttering harsh cries.

George plucked and dressed the fowl, roasting it upon the hot coals, and finding it very good eating, although a trifle fishy in taste.

Then, after reloading, he proceeded outside, resolving to go down to the level and bring up the bear skin, for, as he knew he must live in the old ship for some time, he determined to make his quarters as comfortable as possible.

CHAPTER V.

As he went down the side of the berg, George cut broad steps in the ice wherever he could do so with his knife, so that the ascent would be easier, and resolved to throw ashes or some other rubbish upon them in order to give him a better foothold.

As fur boots were better for walking than leather ones, he resolved to cover the soles of his with bear-skin, but for the present he must do as well as possible, and not slip any more than he could help.

Reaching the base of the berg he found a lot of white foxes tearing away at the bundle of bear-flesh he had left, and pulling the skin to pieces with their sharp teeth.

He raised his gun and fired, and so close together were the little creatures that he brought down two of them at one shot.

The others scampered away, but soon returned, having, evidently, no intention of being cheated out of their dinner.

By this time George had reloaded, and as the foxes came up he killed another, and then dashing right among them, he clubbed his gun, and dealt hearty blows right and left, laming three or four and killing as many in addition.

The pack dashed away again, and George killed those that had been stunned or that could not get away, reloading after this, so as to be ready in case the animals returned.

They had evidently tired of this sort of reception, however, and kept their distance, watching the young man curiously, and occasionally giving vent to a sharp yelp, not unlike the bark of a dog.

George immediately set to work skinning the foxes and cutting off such portions of the flesh as would be best to eat, making these up into one bundle and the skins into another.

Then he went up to the ship, and spent the next day in dressing the skins, scraping off all the fat and bits of flesh, and rubbing them well with wood-ashes from the stove.

The cabin had now become quite warm, and in order to keep it so he nailed thin strips of skin all around the edge of the door, so as to keep out the cold draughts.

We might better have said he pinned up his strips, for, of course, he had no nails or hammer; but he did have his knife, and he could make wooden pins, which he drove into the cracks with the butt of his gun, thus securely fastening the strips which he had cut from the skins.

The skin of the bear had been ruined, and was good for nothing but this work, and George laughed as he sat on the edge of a bunk cutting one of the fox skins into suitable pieces wherewith to make a pair of boots.

"The little beggars would tear up my fine bearskin, would they? Well, I'll make 'em pay for it with their own, see if I don't."

The next day it snowed, and after that George could go down much easier than he could before, the snow covering the slippery steps, and the new shoes he had made to go over his boots assisting him likewise.

The shoes had been sewed together with thin pieces of hide well twisted, and although they may not have been as elegant looking as a pair of city boots, they answered every purpose.

George determined to search the hold of the old ship later on, but at present he was much too busy in making himself comfortable to think of anything else.

The foxes supplied him with food, with material for new clothes, with warm coverings for his bed, and plenty of occupation as well.

He did not care to use up all his ammunition upon them, and they had now grown too wary to allow him to approach near enough to knock them on the head with his gun.

He therefore made traps for them, digging holes in the ice and putting a piece of meat at the further end, so that when the animal seized and tried to draw it out, he pulled a big block of ice down upon himself, which, if it did not immediately kill him, held him fast until the young hunter came along and finished the job.

There was plenty of wood in the cabin for him to burn, but much of it was too stout for him to break, and he was obliged to leave it and take away the frailer portions.

The fat of the foxes was valuable as fuel, however, and, finding an old earthen dish in a cupboard where the steward had evidently kept his utensils, he used this for boiling out the better portions, throwing the refuse into the fire.

There was no way of letting the smoke out, but once a day he opened the doors and aired the cabin thoroughly a few minutes, with the wind blowing freely, serving to make the place as sweet and pure as one could wish.

From time to time he saw many of the birds he had seen on the first day aboard the Ice King, but as the flesh of the foxes was better eating, he did not care to waste his powder and ball upon the birds, and perhaps run the chance of missing.

During his spare moments he made a complete suit of fox-skin, boots, breeches, coat, hood and mittens, so that when his present clothes gave out he could have others, or could have a change in case he got his others wet.

They were sewed with sinew, by means of a hard wood fid or marline-spike, which he made with his knife, the holes for the cord being pierced by the point of the same useful weapon, though afterward he drew out several nails from the woodwork and beat them to a fine, sharp point with the stock of his gun.

These served as needles, and were afterward improved when George came across a portable forge in the hold, together with a blacksmith's implements, a most welcome addition to his stock.

Little by little he had so improved the descent from the ship that at last he had a fine winding stairway, the steps being broad and level, enabling him to go up and down with great rapidity and with very little danger of slipping or falling.

This gave him a decided advantage over his former condition, for, one day, seeing a couple of bears' cubs playing at the foot of the berg, he seized his weapon and hurried down before the old bears came up.

Whipping out his knife, he fell upon the cubs and dispatched them both in a twinkling, right in sight of their irate dam, who, with a terrible roar, now came hurrying forward, followed by her mate.

George concluded not to try conclusions with the two huge bears, one being quite sufficient, and so, slinging the body of one of the cubs over his shoulder—and it was no mean weight, either—he hurried up the steps.

The mother bear smelt of the body of her cub, and then, with a hoarse growl, started in pursuit of the despoiler who had carried off the other one.

George went up a dozen steps, and then paused to rest and look back, the weight upon his shoulder being too great to allow of a very rapid ascent.

To his horror, the bear was coming up the steps in his wake at no mean gait.

He at once resumed his march and put a

dozen more steps behind him before he again paused.

The bear was still in pursuit and had gained on him, the steps being made low purposefully to assist the young fellow's going up and down, and therefore affording his four-footed foe the same assistance.

Up went George and up went the bear, but when the former had covered two-thirds of the required distance, he saw plainly that he could not make the coveted shelter of the ship before the bear would overtake him.

Dropping the body of the cub upon one of the steps, he quickly unslung his gun, looked to the priming, cocked it, and kneeling by the dead cub, prepared for the struggle.

"I must not waste a single shot or I am lost," he thought, and then, as the female bear came nearer, her jaws foaming and her eyes inflamed with rage, he took a careful aim, and, when the dam was within two paces, fired, aiming straight for the heart.

The report sounded like a thunder-clap in these silent solitudes, there was a cloud of smoke, a roar, a heavy fall, a few groans, and then all was still.

When the smoke cleared, the bear was seen stretched out upon the ice several steps below, where she had rolled in the death agony.

There was no sign of life remaining, but our hero concluded to save what he had already taken before venturing to acquire more, and, therefore, without taking time to reload, he picked up the body of the cub and made his way to the ship.

"There's supper and grub for many days and a warm jacket in the bargain," he muttered, as he threw down the body, took out his knife, and began the operation of removing the skin and cutting off some of the juiciest portions of the carcass to roast over the fire.

This having been accomplished, he took the hide and meat into the cabin, leaving the remainder of the carcass lying on deck.

After cooking a juicy steak and eating it with great relish, George bethought him of the body of the female bear, and at once hurried down to procure it.

When he reached it he found that it was too heavy to lift, and then he discovered that he had carelessly left his knife in the cabin, instead of placing it in his belt as he had supposed.

If he could not remove the old bear, he could at least fetch up the other cub, and, seeing nothing of the male, he hurried down, threw the cub on his back, holding on by the hind legs, and retraced his steps.

He had reached the place where he had left the dead bear, and concluded to go on up to the ship and then return with his knife; but he had scarcely taken half a dozen steps before he heard a roar, and saw, right before him, coming around a narrow path leading off from the main ascent, the father of the dead cubs.

In some manner the creature had passed him unseen, had, perhaps, been on the little path when he had gone down, and here he was now disputing the way with the one who had slain his mate and cubs.

A thrill of horror shot through the young man's frame as he realized his awful peril.

He had left both knife and gun in the cabin, and now he stood face to face with an angry bear without the means of defending himself.

He could not reach the ship, and if he remained on the berg, the bear could easily keep him there, perhaps to perish with the cold.

Truly, his situation was more desperate than any he had yet been in.

CHAPTER VI.

It was a sad party that returned to the Seagull that evening, and there was more than one heavy heart when their sad news was told.

Tom, the cabin boy, who was among those who had seen poor George borne away beyond their reach out upon the hungry ocean, was more affected than any one, and although he managed to restrain his tears during the return to the vessel, he could do so no more when he had entered the cabin and saw the captain's daughter with such a sweet smile upon her face, waiting to receive the one she loved so well.

The boy burst out into a fit of crying and sobbing so violently that it seemed as if his heart would break, and Jessie was really alarmed for him, as he had always been a happy little fellow, and had never been

known to give way to such an exhibition of emotion as the present.

"What's the matter, Tom?" she asked, putting one arm about his neck and pushing back his fur hood.

But Tom sobbed so bitterly that utterance was impossible, his pent-up sorrows getting the better of the poor lad, and Jessie did her best to soothe him, knowing that something unusual must have happened to affect the boy so strongly.

She thought first of her father, but she knew at once that Tom would never be moved in such a manner at anything that might have happened to Cap'n Sam, and then her thoughts flew at once to George, of whom she knew the boy was passionately fond.

"Has anything happened to George?" she asked, while a sudden pallor overspread her cheeks.

At this question Tom's sobs broke out afresh, but he nodded his head and tried to speak and to calm himself.

"Is he badly hurt?"

Tom shook his head, wiped his streaming eyes, and then with a manly effort to remain calm, although the recital was wringing his very heart-strings, told the sad story of how George had been carried out to sea on a cake of ice, and just as he had finished Cap'n Sam entered and confirmed the mournful news.

There was clearly nothing to be done for the present, however sad his friends might feel at the young fellow's loss, for the night was coming on, the sun having already disappeared below the horizon, and George had already drifted out of sight when the party had returned to the vessel.

They had followed as far as they could, as the open water had cut off their progress, so that the only chance of their finding him eventually lay in the possibility of the pack closing in again and giving them a road on which to travel.

Even then the poor fellow, if ultimately found, might be dead, for he was without shelter or food, drifting out to sea upon a cake of ice which, if it did not go to pieces, might finally prove to be his bier, and carry his dead body far up into the unknown regions of the icy North, never to be recovered.

In the morning, Cap'n Sam, Jack Spratt, Jenkins, Williams, Mr. Howser, and the ship-keeper, six men in all, set out to search for their missing comrade, carrying food sufficient to last three or four days, besides arms, ammunition, and extra clothing for all hands.

They took a small compass with them, so as to be able to find their way back, a small but powerful telescope, a flask of brandy, matches, tinder, a portable spirit-lamp, which could be packed into the smallest compass, and carried in the pocket, and one or two extra blankets strapped upon their shoulders.

Descending from the vessel to the ice field, they took the direction in which they had last seen George disappear, and found upon reaching the open water that the ice had closed in to such an extent that they would be able to continue their march for some miles.

Straight on they went along the water's edge, keeping a sharp lookout for flaws, rotten ice or hideous abysses, and up to noon had met with no obstacle to their progress or adventure of any kind.

The air, although cold, was still, and they were therefore able to endure it, when, had the wind been blowing, they would have suffered greatly, even at a much higher temperature.

Reaching a berg of medium size which had become attached to the floe and was at rest, they halted on the lee side, where the sun shone with considerable vigor, and provided a frugal meal, each man taking a few drops of brandy in the hot tea which the ship-keeper prepared over the lamp.

Then Cap'n Sam and the second mate made their way to the top of the berg and swept the horizon with the glass in the hope of discovering some vessel in the distance which George might have reached, or perhaps of finding some trace of the young man himself.

Behind them, at some distance, they beheld their own vessel, the flag flying from the masthead to attract attention, but, look as they would, could see nothing which they could by any possibility call a ship.

Far away to the north, so as to be hardly distinguishable, they could see a high berg, which, after scanning attentively for some minutes, they pronounced to be at rest, but this was all.

The water was still open, and perhaps the cake which had borne George from their sight had grounded somewhere, and with the hope of at least finding his body, they pressed on until night, pausing an hour for supper, and then pressing on by the light of the moon.

On and on, until midnight, they continued their march, the light being sufficient to show them the object of their search, had he been in sight.

Then they formed a camp under a snow bank, in the lee of a great mass of ice, and slept comfortably until morning.

During the forenoon they came across a pair of polar bears, and at once began the attack, the animals fighting fiercely, but being at last overpowered by force of numbers.

The flesh of the brutes furnished them with a hearty supper, the best they had had since leaving the vessel, and the skins, stretched upon harpoons driven into the ice, formed an excellent shelter from the wind.

"Poor George wishes he hadn't come up into these terrible regions as much as I do, I reckon," said Jack Spratt, as he and his companions lay upon their blankets sheltered from the wind, Cap'n Sam and Mr. Hawser having gone off by themselves to explore the immediate vicinity of the camp.

"And I needn't have come out here either, if I'd followed the advice of the great tragedian, Booth," continued Jack. "As the immortal William says, 'There is a tide in the affairs of men,' and so forth, but I didn't follow his advice, and here I am, worse off than a party of barn-stormers who haven't money enough to reach the next town."

"If I'd only stuck to the stage, now, what fine acting you would have seen. I tell you, sirs, there's the fire of genius within my bosom, only waiting to be kindled into an inextinguishable flame, which will roar and crack and burst its bonds, and one day make me famous. Yes, sir, I have fire within me that—"

"Save it," said Jenkins, puffing at his pipe, "it's going to be a cold winter."

"Aha, if you could only hear me deliver those stirring lines of the immortal poet once, you would feel that I had missed my vocation. I may not be a Macready or a Roscius, but I tell you, sirs, that at the present day I would have few equals and no superiors, if I had only stuck to the boards."

"You can stick to the boards now," returned the irreverent Jenkins. "Just tar the lower hold of your trowsers, and set on deck for ten minutes. If you don't stick to the boards then, I'm a land shark."

"Aha, miscreant! I mean the stage. Stop—let me repeat those soul-inspiring lines which Antony spoke:

"Friends, Romans, Countrymen, lend me your ears."

I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.
The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones.
So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus
Hath told you Caesar was ambitious.
If it were so, it was a grievous fault;
And grievously hath Caesar answered it.
Here, under leave—"

When he had reached this point, the furthest he had ever got in his oration, Jack Spratt was suddenly interrupted by a shout from outside.

All hands leaped up, and in another moment Cap'n Sam came in and said, excitedly: "Hawser an' I has found a party of natives just over the hill, and they says they saw George floatin' down stream on a cake o' ice las' night."

"Hurrah!" cried the men.

"An' they've got dogs 'nd sledges, an' they'll go with us far's we want to go. What d'ye say? Shall we continer the s'arch fo' th' boy?"

"Yes, yes!" cried all hands.

"Then that's settled, and as soon as we can get ready off we go to find George 'nd fetch him back, dead or alive."

"He must be alive," said Hawser. "There was the bear he had killed. That would give him food enough."

"So it would; never thought of that. B'jinks, we may fetch him back alive arter all. Now, then, boys, let's go over to the natives, and then good luck to our search!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE Esquimaux village was about two miles away, and thither the entire party now trav-

eled, all anxious to be on the move, and rescue their companion if there was any chance of so doing.

There was considerable of the daylight left by the time they reached the village, and as the dogs and sledges were all ready, they lost no time in getting away.

There would be a moon, later on, and this would give them a chance to continue their journey for many hours.

There were three sledges, each drawn by from eight to a dozen dogs, and in these the captain and his party disposed themselves with one Esquimaux to every two whites.

They skirted the floe, keeping close to the water, until they came to where the ice had packed in so closely that they could cross over, there being a sort of temporary bridge thrown over at this point.

Having accomplished this much, they rested for the night, having picketed the dogs in a snow bank and encamped themselves in the sledges under the robes, where they slept as comfortable as they could have done in the bark.

"Think of my tramping around the country in this fashion," muttered Jack Spratt to his companions. "Why, even the worst fly-by-night company that ever made the tour of the circuit has better accommodations than these—and then think of the fame. Ah, why didn't I become an actor!"

"That's the whole trouble. In me are lost to the stage a noble Romeo, a dashing Othello, a magnificent Shylock, and a glorious Mark Antony. Ah! how I could have spoken those lines:

"Friends, Romans, etc.
Lend me, and so forth,
I come to bury Cæsar, and so on.
The evil that men do—hum, hum.
There was a Brutus once
Who would have brooked the eternal
devil
To hold his seat in Rome.
Not that I loved Cæsar less, but that I
loved Rome more.
What a falling off was there, my coun-
men.
But Brutus says——"

"Oh, I say, Jack, let up!" cried Mr. Hawser.

"You're all off the track, anyhow, and are no nearer Mark Antony than we are to the North Pole. For Heaven's sake give us a rest occasionally."

Jack thereupon subsided, and nothing more was heard of him until morning, when all hands turned up, had breakfast, and set out once more upon their journey.

"There's that peak away off yonder," said Cap'n Sam. "Maybe he tried to reach it so as to get a sight of the vessel. S'pose we go to'ards it?"

They did so, but had not proceeded far when a snow-storm set in, which obliged them to halt, as it was impossible to see their way more than a few yards ahead.

"This is unfort'nate, I swow," murmured Cap'n Sam, late in the afternoon, when the snow was falling heavier than ever. "F that boy's caught out in't, he'll get lost, sure's preachin', I swan! If it could on'y have held up another day, we might have found him."

Instead of holding up another day, however, the storm continued, and when it was over the provisions were nearly used up, the air was intensely cold, and the Esquimaux utterly refused to go another step.

There was nothing to do but return, and this was done as soon as the cold weather moderated a bit, the village of the Esquimaux being reached after a day's hard traveling.

Remaining here over night, the party were supplied with food to last them until they reached the vessel, and then they set out, their spirits considerably less bright than when they started.

They could not induce the natives to accompany them, either by entreaties or bribes, and they were therefore obliged to return on foot, when the sledges would have reduced the time of the journey by one-half.

"Smighty strange," observed Cap'n Sam. "They was willin' nuff to take us away, but nothin' kin induce 'em to take us back to the old bark. Durn me 'f I can understan' it. I know the natives hereabouts isn't over an' above obligin', but these fellows is, 'nd then they isn't, 'nd that's what gets me up a stump."

The ice had greatly changed in its appearance during their absence, the floes having

closed in where there had been open water, and long, narrow lanes extending away on either side where before the ice had been solid, so that it was only by knowing the direction they must take that they could at all find their way.

They were all plodding along over the rough and broken ice, when there came that ominous sound which they all knew so well, and they all sprang from the spot in alarm.

Not all, for one man was left behind, and when Cap'n Sam looked back and saw that a new lane had opened in the floe, and that Jack Spratt, clinging to a jagged bit of ice, his legs half in the water, was floating along in mid-stream, at the imminent risk of losing his life.

The distance was too great for him to jump, and as several jets of water were now seen spurting up from the water, and the sharp, pistol-like reports continued, no one knew at what moment the whole pack might break up and cast them into the icy flood.

Jack drew his legs up out of the water, and, sitting on the highest part of the mass of ice, which was neither a cake nor a berg, sung out:

"I say! This here is a life on the ocean wave with a vengeance. Can't you fellers do nothing for me?"

They could only run along the edge of the ice, taking good care that nothing happened to themselves, and bidding him be of good cheer and hold on as long as he could.

Fortunately, the great mass of the ice was urging him forward instead of away from his friends, and Jack was in hopes that the floe might unite again and give him a chance to rejoin his companions.

He watched his opportunity, and when two large pieces of the floe came in contact with his smaller one, he leaped off and took great flying strides toward his friends, who were running along the edge for dear life, not knowing at what time they might be engulfed in the chilling waters.

There was still a lane of open water too wide to jump between him and the others; but he could see that, further on, it grew narrower, and he hurried forward in order to reach this point before the channel grew wider.

The floe swung in towards the mass of more solid ice; there was a grating and grinding; the water flew up in blinding jets, report followed report, huge blocks of ice were thrown up as though they had been feathers, and the waters again divided, surging and roaring as though the end of all things had come.

Jack had reached the more solid ice by this time, and his friends seized him quickly and hurried him away, for he was so exhausted that he could not have gone another step without their assistance.

There was still danger from the moving ice, for an adverse wind had set in, and it was this that was causing all the trouble, and no one knew where it might end.

Fortunately, the bark was beyond its influence, for she lay in a little cove away from any main current, and the pack ice might sweep and surge within a hundred feet of her and never move her from her position.

The wind kept up all the afternoon, and the party was obliged to go considerably out of the way in order to avoid the great hummocks of ice which lay in their path and made the road almost impassable.

When night came on the wind died away, and before long the skipper announced that he could see a light swung from the topmast of the bark as a guide to her position.

An hour later they stepped aboard, and almost the first person they met was little Tom, the cabin boy, who appeared to have something on his mind.

"What's the matter, Tom?" asked Cap'n Sam.

"Did you find George?"

"No, 'nd I don't believe we ever will find him now, my boy."

"Something has happened, cap'n."

"Well—well, what is it? Let's have it, old feller. Don't be frightened."

"Oh, sir, Jessie has——"

Cap'n Sam turned pale, caught Tom by the arm and cried, eagerly:

"What? What's happened to her?"

"Been carried away!"

"Been carried away! Who done it?"

"Esquimaux."

"The dirty sneaks! I knowed suthin' was up."

CHAPTER VIII.

WE left poor George in a terrible plight, and it is time that we went back to see how he got out of it.

A huge polar bear, savage and hungry for blood, stood between him and the path to the old ship, and there could be no doubt that he would dispute the passage with all his native ferocity.

George was without knife or gun, having left both on board; he could not remain out long in the keen air without meeting his death, and to try and force his way forward was equally hazardous.

"There is no help for it," thought George. "I must get back, bear or no bear. If I remain out here, I shall freeze to death."

Descending the path a bit, the bear remaining stationary, George tried the plan of getting around his four-footed friend, since there was no passing him on the direct road.

He saw no reason why he should not cut out a new path for himself, and he therefore began threading his way around carefully, so as to reach the ship above by another route, and thus outwit his hungry enemy.

The bear seemed to understand his tactics, for he advanced further up the path, and then went off to one side, where he would be directly in George's way as the latter came up.

"Oho! That's where you were hiding first, is it?" cried George, "and that's why I did not see you. Let me see if I can humbug you after all."

Instead of climbing up, as he had begun to do, the young man continued to make his way along the same level until he had passed the point where the bear lay in wait for him.

Then he made his way from ledge to ledge, until he was at least ten feet higher than his foe, and at a point further along the side path.

Bruin suddenly caught sight of him, and began making his way upward at an angle which would quickly intercept George in his rugged path.

The latter rested himself on a broad ledge, and as the bear approached sent the light snow flying with his feet, blinding and annoying the enemy exceedingly.

"I'll teach you to block my way, you great brute," and George picked up a bit of ice which he had laid bare by kicking away the snow, and hurled it with a tremendous force straight at the creature's head.

It struck him fairly, but produced little effect, owing to the thickness of his skull, and merely causing him to wink and utter a growl.

A thought had suggested itself to the young hermit, however, and he now proceeded to act upon it.

He loosened several blocks of ice of various sizes by kicking at them with his feet, and now, as the bear came nearer and his danger increased in consequence, he hurled them one after the other at the brute, making each shot tell.

Blinded and bruised by this most unpleasant shower, the enemy paused and George seized the opportunity to make his way higher up the sides of the berg, at the same time directing his aim toward the regular path, as he had no notion of running the risk of a fall by going out of it at that height.

For a few minutes he was shut out of sight of the bear by protecting ledges, and at last by a tough scramble, one or two falls and a prodigious leap, he succeeded in reaching the main path at a point considerably above where he had left it.

He hurried up at full speed, but on turning a corner, saw that the bear had also regained the path, and was now coming up at a speed faster than his own, his eyes shooting forth a look of hate, his jaws distended, while he uttered a roar that might well have startled a stouter heart than George's.

At any rate, he was ahead of the monster, and that was one great point gained, for let him once reach the side of the old ship and he could put his angry foe at defiance.

How he wished for his gun at that moment—how he regretted leaving it behind at such a time!

Up he ran, hoping to distance the enemy, and taking the utmost care that he might not fall or slip backward.

Turning once when near the top he saw, to his horror, that the bear was almost upon him.

Seizing hold of a large block of ice which formed part of the sort of guard rail that he had built along the path, George exerted all his strength and forced it from its bed just as

the bear reached the step just below the one on which he himself stood.

Throwing all his strength into the effort, he pushed the great block toward the bear, the loose ice under it being crushed to powder.

It slid down the incline, reached the edge of the ice-built steps, plunged over, and fell right upon the growling and expectant foe, hurling him headlong down the slope, and breaking his skull asunder despite its thickness.

George did not stop to see the success of his maneuver, but hurried up the steps and into the cabin, where he procured his knife and gun, and thus being prepared for fight, descended to where he had left the bear cub that he had been bringing up when surprised by the male animal.

There was no occasion for a fight, as he soon discovered, the animal having been killed by the weight of the ice block which George had thrown over upon him.

To carry the flesh and hide of both his victims to the ship, to repair the pathway and dig out another road from the point two-thirds up to the top, and to dress and rub the hides and to stow the meat into a cool place, occupied the remainder of the day.

During the evening George boiled out a quantity of tallow, putting it as fast as it was refined into a deep dish, so that as it cooled it made a solid cake, to be used afterward as required.

He would want more light than that afforded by the fire in the nights to come, and he intended to make a lot of candles, using the strips torn from his inside shirts for wicks, and the barrel of his gun for a mold.

The next day he got his gun to pieces, made his wicks, melted his tallow and molded a fine lot of candles, big and round and three feet long, each one being afterwards cut with a knife into three equal lengths, so that when he had used up his present supply of tallow, he had close upon a hundred long, hard, firm, extra fine tallow candles, one of which would easily burn all night.

The blades of his jack-knife helped him in putting his gun together again, being useful in fitting the little screws and rivets into place, and now the piece was well cleaned and oiled and much improved in condition.

It was not much of a job to draw the candles out of their improvised mold after the tallow had set, for a very little heat after the barrel had first been chilled to harden the tallow, served to loosen it sufficiently to be drawn out, hard and smooth and without a break.

Of course he spoiled a few before he got the hang of it, but after a little experience the young candle-maker turned out his wares rapidly and in good shape.

"There," he muttered, surveying his work at night; "I have nearly a hundred candles, and I can make more whenever I choose. If the candle goes out I can light another at the fire, and if the fire goes out I can light it with a candle. I mustn't let both go out together, that's all."

The making of gloves, boots, jackets, fur caps and hoods next occupied the young hermit's time, and he worked away until he had used up all his material, and had clothing enough to last all winter, comfort being considered, however, rather than good looks in its construction.

The consumption of the refuse fat of the various animals he had killed saved George considerable fuel, but there finally came a time when all the wood that he could conveniently cut with the tools at his command had been used up, and the question was how could he procure more?

There was enough, to be sure, but the difficulty was in cutting it, for he had no saws nor axes, and nothing but a knife to reduce the hard wood about him to the proper size for burning.

He hunted through the hold, candle in hand, and at last came upon an old dilapidated tool-chest containing a few files, a long knife, and a number of leaden weights and some brass wheels, which had evidently been portions of an old clock, together with, what was most valuable to him, an old horn powder-flask, containing half a pound of coarse gunpowder.

By means of the portable forge already mentioned and the files he made the knife into a saw, and then making several molds from hard wood, he melted his lead and cast a number of bullets, being able to turn out

quite a number to each mold before the latter burned out.

He had now an increased supply of powder and ball, a saw with which he could cut all the firewood he wanted, candles, clothing, food in abundance, with promise of more to come, now that he had the means of procuring it, besides a shelter which would last him as long as he would want to use it.

Two things he lacked, books and companions, and for the present he did not see how he could obtain either.

There might possibly be some old books somewhere in the hold, or in the men's quarters, and though probably considerably out of date, might prove interesting reading, but if he did find them the young man would have to make them the sole companions of his solitary life.

So he thought until one morning, when, coming on deck to take his customary exercise, George was much surprised upon looking down to see upon the plain below, at some little distance, but approaching the ship, a party of men, nearly a dozen in number.

"Whites or Esquimaux?" thought he. "It makes all the difference in the world which it is. I must be cautious, and not discover myself till I find out."

CHAPTER IX.

STANDING behind the bulwarks of the old ship in such a manner as to get a full view of the party below, and still not be seen by them, the young Crusoe of the icy north watched the new-comers, being as yet undecided as to whether they were whites or natives.

If they were whites, either his former comrades or the crew of some beleaguered vessel, all well and good, but if Esquimaux or Indians, there was considerable doubts as to the agreeable nature of the meeting, particularly as far as George was concerned.

The Innuits—their real name, the term Esquimaux being applied in derision by the Indians, their natural enemies—were proverbial thieves, and would steal everything in the ship and that itself, if they could carry it off, while the Indians, though as great thieves as the others, added a savage ferocity to their other bad qualities, and were known to treat all their enemies, white, brown, or yellow, with the most insatiate cruelty.

"It's being turned out of house and home and left to starve or freeze, on the one hand," mused George, "or to be tortured to death on the other, so that, on the whole, my visitors, if they are not whites, may prove decidedly troublesome."

In order to be prepared for action, George loaded and capped his weapon, having his ammunition handy in case he would be obliged to fire more than once, and then, standing guard as before, awaited the coming of the strangers.

Nearer and nearer they came, until at last, halting at the foot of the berg, some of the party were left behind, the others climbing up the steps toward the old ship.

This had evidently attracted their attention, and they were now about to examine it more closely.

As yet, George could not determine whether they were whites or natives, the distance being too great to enable him to distinguish their features, and their dress told him nothing.

If they proved to be natives, and he allowed them to reach the vessel, they would overhaul the vessel and eject him, for he could not bar the doors against them, not having the time to make them fast, and they, of course, seeing that the doors were open, would naturally want to explore the interior of the vessel.

Occasionally he would lose sight of them, and then they would come into view again, and although he heard the sound of their voices, he could not distinguish any words.

Almost devoured with anxiety, George awaited the moment when the men would be near enough to enable him to tell whether they were friends or enemies, and at last, as they turned the last angle of the winding path and appeared in front of him, all doubts were set at rest.

The men were Esquimaux, and there were seven of them in all, stout, heavy, rough-looking fellows, with whom it would be disagreeable, to say the least, to get into a quarrel.

Thinking that they had gone quite far enough, George now sprang upon the rail, re-

vealing himself to the astonished gaze of the men below.

"Go back!" he cried, waving his hand threateningly, and raising his weapon. "Go back, or I shall fire."

The men stopped and began jabbering away amongst themselves excitedly, their talk being of course utterly incomprehensible to the young man above.

They were evidently debating, however, whether they should advance or not, and now and then they pointed at George, and extended one finger, as if questioning whether they were others with him, or if he was alone.

They advanced a few paces, and the young fellow leaped to the deck, his head just showing above the rail, and pointed his gun at them, making signs that he would fire if they came any nearer.

Then a sudden thought entered his head, and he turned and called, as if bidding a number of his friends come to his assistance.

Then he rapidly changed his position, appearing and disappearing at various points, so as to give one the impression that there were several men moving about the deck.

The natives paused, irresolute, and then retreated to a point where the young man would not have them in range if he took it into his head to fire.

Determining to make the most of his time, George now hurried below and brought up three full suits that he had made from the bear and fox skins, as well as a number of long sticks.

Running one of the sticks up through the middle of one of the suits, from the boots to the hood, he fixed two or three of them in this manner, and propped them against the rail, the heads appearing above and looking like men's heads.

Then he laid some round sticks which he hurriedly charred in the fire to make them look like the barrels of muskets upon the rail, as though the men were pointing their weapons at the enemy.

Taking the extra hoods and caps, he placed them along the rail, fastening them down with lumps of ice, and putting sticks beside them in the same manner as he had arranged the others.

To one coming up the steps, not in the secret, there would now be given the impression that there were seven or eight armed men behind the bulwarks of the ancient vessel ready to give a particularly warm reception to any invading force.

George had made all these preparations, and was now talking loudly, as if addressing his friends, and had waited some little time, when the enemy again put in an appearance.

Springing upon the rail as the men came in sight, our young Crusoe waved them back, pointing to his own gun and to the heads ranged along the line of the rail, intimating that if the men advanced he and his friends would fire upon them.

This caused them to hesitate. Though they still seemed to think that they might venture to advance, making signs that they were friendly, that they meant the young man no harm, and that they only wished to warm themselves in his house, and to partake of food.

"Not much you won't," thought the young man. "You'd like to discover that I was all alone, wouldn't you? I'd be without a place to lay my head if you did."

George gave a firm refusal by signs to their request, and pointed his weapon so threateningly at them that they retreated at once in great confusion.

He was positive that they would not return again until they had consulted with their friends, and this time he employed by strengthening his dummies, so that they might not blow or fall over, and by fixing the door, so that if he were forced to retreat, he could keep them out better than at present.

He also took a quantity of powder, equal to about four charges, moistened it, and rolled it up into a round ball, with one side slightly drawn out like the top of a cone.

Not many minutes had elapsed after this before the whole force came rushing up the steps with loud cries, evidently dragging one of their number against his will.

George dashed into the cabin and out again in a jiffy, bringing a burning brand with him from the fire.

Dropping his ball of moistened powder upon the brand, it began to burn slowly, giving out many sparks and a cloud of white smoke,

and then, when it was well under way, the ball of fire was hurled right among the startled Esquimaux, frightening them out of their wits, and causing them to take precipitate flight.

The unwilling leader or prisoner, whichever it might be, that they had been thrusting forward, was now suddenly left alone, and as George sprung upon the rail, uttering a loud shot, this person sprung up the steps and cried out, frantically:

"George! Save me from these horrible brutes!"

The person was a white, and spoke good English.

Not only that, but it was a young girl who spoke, and none other than Jessie Carter, Cap'n Sam's beloved child.

CHAPTER X.

AFTER Cap'n Sam's departure in search of George Underhill, the first mate, Mr. Hook was left in command until the party should return.

The party consisted of Mr. Hook, Adam Baster, the cook; Overton, Smith, Jackson, Josephs and Thompson, seamen; Tom, the cabin boy, and pretty Jessie Carter, the skipper's daughter.

In the absence of George, Tom was made much of by Jessie, and when he had nothing to do, which was pretty much all the time, the boy was with her, reading or talking or escorting her out upon the ice for a short distance.

Tom seemed to have gotten the idea, in some mysterious manner, that George would eventually be found, and this was a great comfort to Jessie and was one secret of her fondness for the boy and her desire to have him with her as much as possible.

Three days after the departure of Cap'n Sam the weather being mild and pleasant, Jessie started off for a walk with Tom at her side, both being well protected from the cold.

Mr. Hook cautioned them not to go beyond the sight of the vessel, from the topmast of which a signal flag was kept flying as a guide to the men when they took their customary exercise on the ice.

Tom promised to take good care of his charge, and away they went, laughing and chatting, now running swiftly over the smooth surface and now walking, Tom helping Jessie over the hummocks, and all the time chattering like a young magpie.

They had gone perhaps two miles from the vessel, and were walking along a winding path surrounded by great hills of ice, the signal flag being invisible from where they stood, when Jessie paused, and pointing ahead, cried excitedly:

"Oh, Tom, look there! Have you a pistol or anything? There's a bear, I do believe."

"It's a funny-looking bear, Miss Jessie, to have only two legs."

"But he's standing on his hind feet."

"Guess those are the only feet he's got. It isn't a bear at all, only a man, one of the natives, perhaps. Let's get out of here. I don't like his looks."

The two turned in order to reach the more level ice, and at that moment two forms similar to the first appeared by its side, all three rapidly advancing.

Tom seized Jessie's hand and hurried away, not caring to meet these strange men whom he was afraid might prove enemies, as he had heard that the inhabitants of these northern wilds were often treacherous and dangerous to meet alone.

They had taken but a few steps, however, when three of the strange men appeared in front of them, and looking back, Tom saw that the first three men were rapidly approaching.

"This way, miss!" cried the lad, hurrying Jessie up an opening in the masses of ice. "Once we get in sight of the bark, there'll be more show for us."

The strangers now uttered a series of peculiar cries and hurried, in a body, towards the rift in the ice, up which the boy and young girl had made their way.

Tom quickly reached the top and caught sight of the flag, a blue speck in the distance, but at the same time saw something else which made his heart stand still.

This was a group of half a dozen of the same sort of fellows who had pursued them below—little, fat, squat men, all clad in fur, with yellow faces, black, twinkling eyes, and an expression most forbidding and repulsive.

They were armed with short spears, which they brandished at sight of the boy, and, with guttural cries, made a dash at him.

Tom had nothing but a sheath-knife, but he drew this hurriedly, putting Jessie behind him, and stood his guard bravely.

He forgot, for the moment, that the foe was both before and behind, but a sudden cry from Jessie caused him to realize his desperate situation in an instant.

"Come, make a dash for it with me!" exclaimed the brave boy, seeing that there was one place open, that at the side.

Away they hurried, side by side, but the Esquimaux were fleet of foot than they, and in a moment they were completely surrounded.

Tom clasped Jessie to his side with his left hand, and prepared to defend himself with his right.

The first man who advanced and attempted to tear the young girl from him received an ugly wound in the face, and the second caught a hearty kick in the abdomen which caused him to utter a yell of agony, and sprawled him, all doubled up, upon the ice, writhing with pain.

They were too many for the brave lad, however, and he was quickly torn away, deprived of his knife, cuffed and buffeted, and finally thrown senseless upon the ice.

* * * * *

Mr. Hook was standing on the deck of the ice-bound bark, looking out over the dreary expanse, when his eye caught sight of a party at some little distance hurrying across the ice at right angles to the bow of the Seagull.

"Hallo! that can't be Cap'n Sam and the rest, come back so soon," he cried; "nor can it be some of our own fellows. There ain't so many of 'em. Hallo, Overton, Jackson! come up here."

The two sailors quickly came forward, wondering why they should be summoned so abruptly, and, following the extended finger of the mate, they saw what had attracted his attention.

"Have any of our men left the vessel?"

"Only Smith and Thompson, sir, and they didn't go that way. Oh, yes, young Tom and Miss Jessie went off, too."

"Go and bring me the spy-glass from the cabin."

Overton hurried below, and returned quickly with the required article, when the mate scanned the party with the closest attention.

"It's a party of natives," he exclaimed, after a long pause, "and they're in a hurry. Call up all hands. I'm afraid that Tom and the skipper's girl have got into trouble, for I can't see them nowhere."

Soon after that a party of six well-armed men left the bark and hurried off in the direction whence Tom had last been seen.

It was nearly night when they came upon the boy, lying unconscious in the snow, which was stained here and there with blood, and showed signs of a desperate struggle having taken place.

Tom was not dead, although there is no saying what might have happened had he remained there much longer, for his face, fingers and toes were like lumps of ice.

They rubbed snow upon his hands and face, restored the circulation of the blood, and brought him to consciousness, and then made him run all the way back to the vessel, by which time he was in a profuse sweat, when he was put to bed, given a stiff horn of hot grog, and well covered up from all cold draughts.

"I made a good fight for it, sir," he said to the mate, when telling his story; "but they was too many for me. I'd sooner have died than let 'em carry her off; and I guess I would have, anyhow, if you hadn't found me. It's lucky for me you saw the brutes and suspected what they had done."

"You made a good fight for it, Tom, and did all that any one person could do, and none blames you. Poor Cap'n Sam! I'm thinking how he will feel when he comes back and finds his poor child gone away!"

CHAPTER XI.

WHEN Cap'n Sam heard that Jessie had been carried away by Esquimaux he was too much overcome to speak, but when told how Tom had bravely defended her and endeavored, at the risk of his life, to prevent the abduction, he slapped the boy on the back and cried:

"God bless 'ee, young un, yer a trump!"

We've lost George 'nd we've lost Jessie, but we've life 'nd health yet, 'nd we mus' do the best we kin."

"But we ain't so sure George is dead," answered Tom, "and Jessie has only been carried off. Perhaps we'll find 'em both some day or another."

"No, lad, no; there's little hope for that. Yer a good feller 'nd George was fond o' ye 'nd so was my gal, 'nd if we ever get out'en this outrageous country I'll do square by ye, see if I don't. I'll make a man o' ye, Tom, sure's my name's Sam Carter."

Both Mr. Hook and Mr. Hawser suggested that they should go in a body to the Esquimaux village and demand the giving up of Jessie, but Cap'n Sam, who ought to have been as sanguine as anybody, said, sorrowfully:

"No, mates, there's no use in it. The greasy cusses outnumber us five to one, 'nd it isn't likely that they'd stay where we left 'em, they're such a shifting lot. The night time is coming on, too, when everything is dark hereabouts, 'nd the cold is too bitter to stand outside."

"But if we went now—"

"Tis no use, boys. I've thought the thing up 'nd don't see the good o't. 'Fi did I'd go in a minute, but I don't. It'll be a massy if we live through the winter ourselves."

In fact, the cold became more and more intense as the days went on, and where the open water had liked to have proved the death of Jack Spratt, upon the return from the search, there was now a solid field of ice, with never a glimpse of water as far as the eye could reach.

Storm succeeded storm, and the snow was piled deep upon the decks and around the imprisoned vessel, so that now there was nothing to relieve the monotonous prospect, and only a dreary waste of white, overhung by leaden skies, could be seen.

The signal-flag hung from the mast, a solid mass of ice; the halyards were frozen stiff; ice formed so thickly upon the lanterns when exposed that it was useless to put them up, and only within the warm hold or cabin of the old bark could anything like real comfort be found.

Days passed, and merged into weeks, and the long Arctic night was upon them.

The sun had disappeared, and save where the fitful gleam of the northern lights illumined the cheerless expanse, all was black and dark as the grave.

The exercise of the men was confined to the deck, except when the aurora was present, and then they went out upon the ice to a short distance, always keeping the vessel in sight, for to be lost amid the darkness of the northern night meant death.

"Well, well, if there ever was a cheerless place, this is it," growled Jack Spratt, one day, as they all sat around the stove, smoking, reading, or engaged in work. "And to think that in place of this darkness I might be standing in the glare of the footlights, hearing the applause of delighted thousands. What a fool I was not to be an actor!"

"Just think of it! Claude Melnotte, Romeo, Rolla, Richard, Hamlet, Brutus, Rob Roy, Ingomar—I might have been all these. Instead of furs, silken doublets, ermine cloaks, Tartan plaids, and embroidered hose would have been my raiment. And oh! the hundreds of lovely women I would have embraced as Paulines, Parthenias, Juliets or Juliannas, as I went upon my triumphal career through the length and breadth of the land. Where would be Forrest, Booth, or Kemble when I starred? Nowhere!"

"And oh, that sublime speech of Antony's—'Friends, Romans, countrymen! have respect for mine honor that you may hear. How far that little candle sends its beams! Thus shines a good deed in a naughty world. There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune, and, whether 'twere nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows—'"

"I say, Jack," said Mr. Hawser, who had been standing in the doorway leading to the cabin, with a book in his hand, "you're getting awfully mixed. Stick to 'Julius Caesar' if you want to spout Shakespeare, and don't skip off into 'Hamlet,' 'Shylock,' and everything else."

"How do you happen to know what's right or wrong? You were never an actor."

"No, nor a born fool!" and at this there was such a laugh that Jack never opened his

mouth to utter a quotation for two whole days.

As there was a limited supply of wood for use in the galley and the stoves, and there was a decided objection to burning any part of the vessel, Cap'n Sam had had recourse to his supply of oil for some time past, and had eked out the supply of wood by soaking it in oil previous to burning it, using lamps also for heating water, making tea and coffee, and such purposes.

All the oil not ready to hand had in this manner been used up, the casks being then broken to pieces and used as fuel, so that it now became necessary to go into the lower hold for a further supply.

Mr. Hawser, with the shipkeeper and Jack Spratt to assist, and Tom to hold the light, made one of these excursions one night, the men being provided with large copper buckets and a suction pump.

"There's some scrap wood, Tom," said the mate, when he and the men had got to work. "Set your light down here and gather it up. Everything comes in handy nowadays."

The boy placed his lantern firmly on top of a large cask and began gathering up the sticks which the mate had pointed out, some of them being quite large, and while thus engaged, Lewis, the shipkeeper, a clumsy fellow at best, had filled his bucket and was proceeding toward the door in the bulkhead, when he slipped over a pint or so of the whale oil.

The path over the prostrate oil casks was none of the best at any time, and now, being somewhat flurried, the man slipped on the oil he had spilled, his foot slid down to the side of the cask, he dropped to his knees, and away went the bucket, the contents dashing over everything.

The lantern was overturned, and fell between two casks, head to head, where there was a cross beam, and a space had been left in consequence.

There was a sound of broken glass, and Tom uttered a cry of alarm as he hurried to the spot.

"What's the matter?" asked Hawser, in the dark.

"Oh, nothing," mumbled the shipkeeper, half frightened out of his wits. "The lantern fell over—that's all."

"But it ain't all!" cried Tom, in shrill tones. "It's broke, and some oil ran down there, and it's on fire and spreading, and if we don't hurry we'll never be able to put it out."

"Run and call the captain and all hands, Tommy," cried the officer, and as Tom dashed off he and Jack Spratt sprang to the spot, and, tearing off their coats, endeavored to force them down the space between the casks and smother out the flames which had already gained considerable headway.

They were only partially successful, being able to reach the lantern and put it out, the burning oil having made its way along the spaces between and under the casks, and threatening to ignite the wood, which was saturated with oil and highly inflammable.

Cap'n Sam and all hands soon came hurrying to the scene, bearing lights and blankets with which to smother the flames as soon as they appeared, and in order that no more accidents might happen, the buckets were filled and taken away, the pump drawn out and the cask bunged up.

All hands worked with a will, and although there was considerable very dense, stifling smoke, there was no more fire as far as could be discovered, unless it were under the lower tier of casks.

Cap'n Sam would not leave the hold until he was satisfied that the fire was out, but in spite of his caution there was a tiny, smoldering flame away down out of sight, small and insignificant now, to be sure, but to be dreaded as much as a single spark thrown into a powder magazine.

Snow was brought in and thrown liberally over the casks and into the chinks, but, in spite of all this caution, that tiny flame was unseen, unextinguished, and, if not put out, would convert the entire hold into a seething, raging caldron of fire, a furnace in the midst of the ice.

CHAPTER XII.

"SAVE me, George, save me!"

The strange words greeted the ears of the young solitary as the Esquimaux dashed down the icy steps, fleeing for their lives.

The person whom they had been dragging

up, suddenly released from their grasp, had darted up the steps, and now that startling cry rung out upon the silence.

There could be no mistake; the voice, the features were Jessie's, and the strange dress and her appearance then at such a time were all forgotten.

George sprang from step to step, seized the girl in his arms, and, firing a shot after the Esquimaux, adding still more to their terror, he retraced his way to the old ship, saying in tones which expressed his great wonder:

"And can this be you, Jessie, here in this far-away, desolate spot? What could have brought you thither? Has Cap'n Sam been trying to find me?"

"Yes, George dear, it is I, sure enough, and I am as much surprised at seeing you alive and well as you are at finding me among a lot of uncouth natives. What sort of a place is this? Have you a home in an iceberg?"

"What does it look like?"

"Like a ship, but surely—"

"And so it is," and at this moment George reached the side, clambered up, lifted Jessie across, and took her at once into the cabin.

"This surpasses belief," she cried. "Tell me, how did you find it, and how did you escape death when carried away on the ice?"

"It is a long story, dearest, and I must first hear what brought you to me at such a time."

"I was carried away by Esquimaux. Little Tom and I were out walking at some distance from the vessel, when we were surprised. Tom fought like a tiger, but they were too many for him, and I am afraid the poor fellow was killed, for the last I saw of him he was lying on the ice unconscious."

"And was no attempt made to rescue you?"

"A party set out from the vessel, but the natives hurried me away at full speed and out of sight of my friends. Father was out in search of you with part of the crew, and I suppose that he has learned of my disappearance before this. I have traveled with these people for many weeks, and although they have done me no harm, they evidently meant that I should not escape from them."

"They have clothed me as they dress themselves, and only for my white face it would be impossible to distinguish me from the rest of the party."

"To-day they saw this iceberg, and the strange appearance of a ship on top, and determined to see what it was, first leaving me at the bottom in the charge of two of the party, but afterward dragging me up with them, evidently knowing that you would not fire upon one of your own race, and thus hoping to storm the fort."

"Your strange method of warfare terrified them, and they fled, and I was rescued, and now you must tell me your story, for I am dying to hear all about your strange adventures since I saw you last."

"First tell me if your father is anywhere in the neighborhood?"

"I have not seen him since he went in search of you. I do not believe he knows where I have been taken. I do not even know if he returned in safety from his search for you."

George then related his own experiences, and by that time it was dark outside, and both were hungry enough to eat anything.

George prepared supper, and after that they both sat in the warm, well-lighted cabin until a late hour, when our hero declared that he could not have his regular habits so broken up, and that they must both go to bed if they ever expected to get up the next morning.

The young fellow fixed himself up a bed in one of the other rooms, giving his to Jessie, despite her protests; and, after seeing to the fires and going above to determine whether everything was all right, he turned in at last, much later than he had done for some time.

It was a happy life the two young lovers lived in that ancient ship on top of its mound of ice, all alone, with no one within they knew not how many leagues, and day after day slipped by almost imperceptibly.

There was plenty to do, hunting, making useful things for the house, and preparing for the winter, and Jessie was of great assistance to the young Crusoe, besides being a companion, that which he had so longed for in his solitude.

"I don't care so much for books now," he said one day, "since I have you with me."

"But there are books, too, for I found some this very day in an old chest. They are very

old, and some of them are in strange tongues; but there is one upon the art of making one's self beloved."

"Aha! Tell me what it is," cried George, with a laugh, "for I know that you understand it. Have you read the book?"

"Yes, and it's rubbish! The idea of putting down rules for loving and being loved! I'll wager that the writer was an old bachelor, and never had a sweetheart in all his life!"

"Then he wasn't half as lucky as I am, who have no need of writing about the art of love," and George kissed his pretty sweetheart, and told her there was no need of poring over musty old books to find out something which she already knew by heart.

Thus they lived on, in almost perfect happiness, and day by day the sun sank nearer to the horizon until at last it disappeared altogether, and with it came more intense cold, bitter winds, blinding storms of snow, and now and then the aurora lighting up the heavens with its brilliant torch and driving away the darkness.

It was fortunate that George had provided himself with extra fur clothing, for his suits fitted Jessie, with a little alteration, and there was no more bears or foxes, or other animals to furnish any more, supposing those had not been put by.

George went down to the plain occasionally, in order to keep his path clear, and sometimes Jessie went with him, although they usually took their daily walk along the deck, unless the weather was too blustering.

The Esquimaux were never seen after their routing, being evidently too much frightened to care to pay the old ship a second visit, and George and Jessie were therefore unmolested.

Weeks rolled away, and one night, as George came up to see the state of the weather before turning in, he noticed a strange light in the sky, at a considerable distance.

It was not the aurora, for that shone in a different quarter, and this light had an appearance entirely unlike that.

Calling Jessie up on deck, he pointed out the light to her, and asked her what she thought it was.

It was a bright red, with a fringe of black all around the edge, and seemed to be in constant motion.

"It looks like a fire," said Jessie.

"I thought of that, but there are no volcanic peaks in these parts. If we were nearer Iceland or Nova Zembla we might say it was a volcano in action, though it does not look like that either."

"No, it is a huge fire, that's what it is."

"But snow and ice don't burn, and there are no forests—"

"It's a ship on fire!"

"You are right!" cried George, excitedly.

"In that direction lies the old bark with our friends aboard. In some way it has taken fire, and that is what we see. It can be no other. There are no vessels up here, as we know. Driven from their only home by the flames to seek shelter in the sea of ice! My God! what a fearful fate!"

CHAPTER XIII.

WELL had it been for Cap'n Sam and his mates if they had known the danger which threatened them.

They had taken all the precautions, as it seemed, and so retired, well satisfied that the trouble was over.

Had they known more they would not have rested, until they had overhauled every foot of the hold, and been certain, beyond the remotest doubt, they were safe.

This they did not do, and so the fire smoldered and ate its way along from cask to cask and down into the very lowest part of the hold, where the dry wood and the accumulated rubbish of years found a tempting meal for its insatiable appetite.

It was not until two days had passed from the time of the first alarm that anybody went into the lower hold.

Then, when Cap'n Sam opened the door in the bulkhead, a cloud of steam burst out upon him, driving him hurriedly from the spot.

Hurrying back after the first retreat, he heard the crackling of flames, fanned into life by the current of air admitted by the opening of the door.

The flames, gaining ground by being undisturbed, had caused the snow to melt, and it was the steam thus produced that had first blinded him.

Then came a rush of dense, stifling smoke, and he was driven back a second time before he had time to close the door.

In stentorian tones he called all hands, and in a few moments Hook, Hawser, Adam, Jenkins, Williams, Tom and all the rest came hurrying to the scene.

In that brief interval the flames had made terrible headway, and as Cap'n Sam now closed the door, they could see the fire spurt up in great jets from a dozen points.

As the door was closed and fastened, there came the sound of an explosion, and the vessel shook from stem to stern.

A cask of oil had exploded, and the burning substance would be cast upon all sides.

In fact, as Cap'n Sam stood there with his hand on the door, the wood became too hot for the touch, and he withdrew his hand.

"That hold is jist a livin' mass o' fire," he muttered. "The decks'll blow up some time, and then there'll be trouble."

"But we were sure we had put the fire out," said Hawser.

"So we was, but we couldn't 've. We'll have to batten this 'ere door up tight so's she won't bust, 'nd then do the next best thing—get to a safe spot 'fore the hull thing goes."

"Can't we put it out from above by boring holes in the steerage deck and pouring water down?" suggested Mr. Hook.

"No; we'll only be addin' to the draft, an' ye can't put out burnin' oil by pourin' water on it. The ile'll float on top an' burn wuss. 'Sides, the steerage don't run on'y to the fore hatch, and then the hold is open to the deck. The on'y thing to do is to smother it out—it we kin," the latter words being added in a tone that well indicated the serious nature of the situation.

The door was secured by nailing tarpaulin over all the crevices, and the same was done to the fore-castle partition, the latter being now too hot to allow the hands to be placed upon it.

Coolly and systematically the men now went to work, the skipper remaining calm despite the danger.

The articles of most value, the clothing, sail-cloth, blankets, tools and provisions were now brought upon deck and stood in a pile on the quarter-deck, all hands working with a will.

"We've got to have a house," said Cap'n Sam, and now the cabin was stripped of all its lighter timbers, the covering of the try-works, the rail and the galley being taken down and broken up into convenient lengths for handling conveniently.

The sails were unbent from the booms and the latter unshipped and carried across decks to a point where the rail had broken down and then rolled over upon the ice below.

No one thought of resting until morning, and it was well that they did not; for that the flames were raging below with increased violence could be told by the manner in which the snow on the decks, deep as it was, was melting.

Pausing only from sheer exhaustion, and taking a hasty meal and a rest of an hour upon deck, for the cabin and fore-castle were stiflingly hot, Cap'n Sam now ordered everything they had saved thus far to be carried out upon the ice at a safe distance from the vessel.

The boats were lowered from the davits, placed upon rude rollers, and taken to the general depository—it being decided not to take them until all the rest had been placed in safety, some distance from the vessel.

Then, when all had been removed, exhausted nature refused to submit to further demands put upon it, and Cap'n Sam wisely called a halt.

The men wrapped themselves in extra furs and lay down under the lee of the boats to sleep, all hands yielding to the influence, though Cap'n Sam tried hard to remain awake and keep watch.

For hours they slumbered, and then the skipper was awakened by a tremendous explosion, which seemed to shake the ice to its very foundation and cause several huge bergs at a distance to quake as though about to fall.

A bright light shot up into the sky, and the skipper knew that the decks of the devoted bark was blown up, and that the fire would now have full scope to continue its work of destruction.

Tongues of flame fifty feet in height shot up into the air, and glowing sparks fell upon the ice even at that distance.

The masts and rigging were soon a sheet of flame, and all around for many a mile was as light as day, the heat from the burning vessel being easily felt where they lay encamped.

"They ain't much danger now," muttered Cap'n Sam, "and I might's well let 'em sleep."

The masts burned fiercely for some time, and then fell with a frightful crash, the decks upheaving as they fell, while the flames now burst out at the sides and licked up all within their path.

It was a grand, an awful sight, and one to be admired, despite the knowledge that the unfortunate castaways were now without a home.

Even at the distance to which the party had removed—fully half a mile—the heat was considerable, and they all saw the wisdom in not remaining too near the doomed vessel.

The sky was all aglow with the reflection of the conflagration, and the snow was as red as blood from the same cause, the forms of the men being most weird and unearthly looking in the light from the burning vessel.

For hours and hours the doomed bark burned, all the while growing brighter and brighter, and this it was indeed that attracted the attention of George Underhill, far away on his icy pinnacle, sorrowing for his unfortunate friends, who were thus deprived of the only home they might ever know.

CHAPTER XIV.

Hour after hour, in the full glare of the burning vessel, Cap'n Sam and his companions watched the destruction of what had once been their home.

To the skipper it meant more than the loss of a vessel—it meant the loss of the earnings of the voyage—the loss of the savings of years, and a long struggle in the future.

The burning oil ran in rivers over the ice, which cracked and snapped and fell in great masses where the seething streams attacked it; while, by little and little, the charred and blackened hull sank deeper in its icy bed.

The sky was red and lurid; the air was thick with smoke, the surface of the ice was gorged and cut into deep guts, and still the flames roared on, the sparks flew in showers all around, and the smoke drifted away in great clouds to the north.

The heat was greatful, as it did away with the necessity of fires, and when the worn-out crew had rested from their herculean labors and had regained their strength, they set about building a shelter which should do for their home until the breaking up of the ice in the spring.

The house was completed and occupied before the fire had gone out, but even before it died down completely they were able to approach the wreck, and with axes and crow-bars, save considerable from the flames, many large beams, charred on the outside but still sound within, being cut away and carried off by the enterprising wreckers.

For a long time, however, the keel and other heavy portions of the wreck continued to burn furiously, it being impossible to approach them on account of the clouds of steam which constantly arose from the melting snow and ice.

At last, however, the light went out, the ice fastened its fetters about the pitiful remains of what had once been a noble vessel, the darkness of the Arctic night once more set in, and all was as wild and dreary as before.

In their rude house, the boats drawn in safe from harm and ready to be used when the ice broke up, the provisions being carefully stored and plenty of warm clothing on hand, the little party now entered upon the second period of their winter life in these desolate wilds with lighter hearts and better spirits than any one would have supposed they could have possessed when all was so cheerless and forbidding.

While the shelter was not as roomy as the vessel had been, its occupants were at least comfortable, and had only the breaking up of the ice to look forward to with some apprehension, though, of course, the loss of his only daughter preyed upon the old skipper's mind and gave him cause for regret.

There was nothing that they could hunt, and the men had little to do, but, knowing how occupation keeps men from quarreling, Cap'n Sam made them all go through a regu-

lar drill on the ice for an hour or two every day, and once a week had an inspection, in which the clothes, general health of the party, weapons and utensils, provisions and supplies were examined, and if anything was not quite up to the mark, suggestions were made and means taken to remedy the fault, whatever it was.

In this way the men were kept busy, mind and body, which prevented discontent, disease and ennui, that worst of all devils.

So the long night passed away, a semi-twilight followed, lasting for a month or more, and at last the sun appeared, giving promise of returning spring, the breaking up of the ice and their delivery from their long imprisonment.

Had the good old bark been still intact there would have been great cause for rejoicing in all this, but now they knew that they must trust entirely to the boats to reach a habitable land, and that there were many dangers before them.

At last the ice gave unmistakable signs of breaking up, and the boats were hauled out, loaded with the things they would most need, and made ready for launching at a moment's notice.

This was not long in coming, for one morning, a month after the sun had made its appearance, there were long lanes of water stretching away in every direction, and the ice on which the shelter stood seemed ready to float away at any moment.

It was taken away hurriedly, the last load was put into the boats, the latter were shoved into the water, the sails were spread, and away went our friends, leaving the place where they had lived so long without regret.

All day they kept on, avoiding the floating ice, but being driven, nevertheless, further from their right course than they fancied.

Night came on and they rested, the sky being so dark that they dared not attempt to continue their voyage for fear of being swamped, the boats keeping as near to each other as convenient.

In the middle of the night, however, Cap'n Sam was startled by a cry from Tom, who was in the boat with him, but at the next moment a great white mass, seen dimly through the veil of night, came hurrying down toward them.

It passed them in safety, but at the next moment an awful crash was heard, followed by shouts, shrieks and groans, succeeded in turn by the most solemn stillness.

"The other boat has been stove in!" cried Tom, in terrified tones, "and it was a mercy it didn't happen to us!"

CHAPTER XV.

GEORGE and Jessie stood on the deck of the old ship for more than an hour watching the glow in the sky, which told them of the destruction of the good old Seagull, neither of them uttering a sound.

At last they turned away and went below, retiring soon afterward, George being careful to leave the fire in such a shape that there might not be a repetition of the catastrophe they had so correctly guessed at.

When George came out the next morning the red light was brighter than before, owing perhaps to the greater darkness and perhaps to the fire having made greater headway during the night.

All day it continued to be visible, and once George fancied he saw a sudden red light shoot up into the air to a great height, while thousands of sparks fell like a shower of stars into the unseen regions below.

The next day it was noticed that black particles like flakes of soot were floating overhead, and occasionally lighting upon the white surface of the ice-covered deck and rail, and upon examining these our hero declared them to be condensed smoke from burning oil, which proved to them, beyond a doubt, that the bark had been destroyed by fire.

The thought that the good old vessel was no more caused the young people much sorrow, for they now believed that they would never see their lost comrades again, that there was no hope of rescue, and that they must live on here in the ancient ship year after year, eking out a precarious existence until death came, at last, to release them from the bonds which the ice king put around and about them and which nothing else could break.

Gradually the light in the heavens died out, and then they felt that they were all

alone, that their young lives must be forever passed in the sea of ice, that all trace of them was now lost, and that they would continue to live on and on in their strange abode long after their names had been forgotten.

However, these gloomy thoughts wore off in time, and they went on with their various duties with cheerful hearts, feeling that all was for the best, although they might not see it, and so, being resigned to their fate, it was not so hard to bear as they had feared.

The hold of the old ship gave them plenty of time for exploration, and many curious things were brought to light which they had not dreamed of finding.

There were old books, rarities even at the time of the sailing of the old ship, quaint old pictures, curiously fashioned beaded purses, containing bits of money, one or two ancient swords, and a flint-lock pistol, some chests of tea, a cask or so of old wine, as red as blood, and with that fine, rich flavor which only age can impart to good wines, the sides of the casks being incrustated an inch deep with sediment, leaving the liquor pure and strong, and of a clear, rich color, being besides an excellent preventive and cure of scurvy, which had already attacked him in a mild form.

There were too's of antique make, nautical instruments, sadly old-fashioned clasp knives covered with rust, pewter pots, cups and plates, which needed only a vigorous rubbing to make them as bright as ever, wooden bowls, horn-handled knives, and two-tined forks, and in fact almost such a collection of old rubbish as can be found in most every ancient attic, omitting, of course, the spinning wheels, quilting frames, and samplers of our great grandmothers.

There were garments, too, packed away in old oaken chests that neither moth nor decay had touched, and which, though not seeing the light for well-nigh a hundred years, had, in this cold storehouse, preserved both color and texture, and which, with but little alteration, would fit George out bravely for the summer season.

"Imagine me in the captain's clothes," the young fellow said, with a laugh, as he hung one particular suit before the fire to air. "Swallow-tail, high collar, coat of blue, canary waistcoat of silk, embroidered with gold acorns, black velvet breeches with gold buttons, white silk hose with blue clocks and low pumps, gold buckles, and all. I only want a cocked hat and pig-tail, big sword and brass speaking trumpet to look like the ghost of old Vanderdecken, cast ashore at last, in the sea of ice."

The curious old garments were put away carefully and given an occasional airing, fur being still the favorite material for clothing, though as the summer came on a change might not be unwelcome.

The long night passed away, the sun appeared again, and in the far distance could be seen the glimmer of water, though all around their ship the ice still remained firm and undisturbed, although George saw plainly that they had been forced up several feet higher than when he first came upon the old wreck.

As the time went on, bears, foxes, ducks, sea fowl and other creatures re-appeared, and one day, as George and Jessie were walking beside the open water, fully five miles from the base of the berg, they saw several seals playing amid the ice-laden waves, and lying quietly upon floating cakes.

One day, too, more than a month after the re-appearance of the sun, George, who had gone off alone a long distance from the ship, saw in the waters, fully six miles away, a huge whale, which sent up two columns of vapor from its spout-holes, and which now and then tossed about on the waves as free and undisturbed as though such things as whale ships and harpoons had never been known.

George was mindful of the next winter, and whenever a chance afforded to take a seal or a fox or a lot of ducks, even a bear, he always improved it, sparing his ammunition when other means were sufficient, so that by the middle of the short Arctic summer he had already laid in nearly enough meat to last all winter.

There was one thing, however, which he did not expect to see, the sight of which nearly turned his brain, until he realized that it was not a dream, but a thing of fact.

He had left Jessie alone in the ship, having decided to go to a greater distance than ever

before, and being prepared to stay away one, or even two nights, if necessary, when, ascending a high, icy bluff overlooking the rushing waters, something in the distance suddenly burst upon his sight which caused him to utter a sudden shout and caper about in the maddest fashion.

It was a whale boat with spread sail making toward the point on which he stood.

He tore off his fur jacket and waved it wildly in the air, he fired a shot from his gun, he shouted and danced and jumped about until you would have thought he was crazy, unless you have been in the same situation.

The boat came towards him, the sail was lowered and run up again, a shout came faintly across the water, and the poor fellow knew then for a certainty that he did not dream, that the boat was real, that he would be taken away from this scene of desolation—both he and Jessie—and that at last their trials would be ended.

Then he suddenly thought of Cap'n Sam and his brave crew, lost in the sea of ice, and his heart misgave him for having been so happy when deliverance could never come to them, and he was saddened to think that it must be so, and that there is never a joy in life but what there is some pain mixed with it, and then he grew more calm and watched the boat coming nearer and nearer, until at last he could distinguish the faces and features of those in it, when suddenly his heart gave a bound and he shouted long and loud as he recognized, sitting in the stern, the man he had long supposed dead, Cap'n Sam himself!

CHAPTER XVI.

THE floating berg had passed the first boat without doing it any damage, but the second had not fared as well, as Tom had said, that having been run down and demolished.

After the first startling cry no other sounds were heard, and as it was too dark to see anything, Cap'n Sam at length called out to know if any of the men had survived the shock.

There was no answer, but even then it was thought that some of the men might have floated away on the berg, and were now too far to reply or to hear Cap'n Sam's hail.

Again and again the call was repeated, but as there was no answer save the echo from the ice crags, the calls presently ceased, and utter silence reigned over the icy deep.

One of the party remained on watch during the night, while the others slept, the lookout being changed every two hours, in order that he too might not become drowsy, and so be unable to keep a sharp eye ahead.

Young Tom was excused from this duty, but the rest, the skipper included, stood watch until the morning, when they were found to be floating through a narrow channel beset on all sides by icebergs and drifting cakes, a collision with which would prove their ruin.

There was nothing to be seen of any of their companions, but a little later in the day they came upon a grounded berg, on one side of which, among the broken and jagged ice masses, were the fragments of an oar and the thwart of a boat, evidently all that remained to tell the fate of their poor comrades.

The occupants of the second boat had been Mr. Hook, Lewis, the shipkeeper, Adam, the cook, and four sailors; those saved, and now in the remaining boat being Cap'n Sam, Mr. Hawser, Jack Spratt, little Tom and Jinkins, Smith and Jackson, sailors, in all seven souls out of all the crew of the Seagull.

How soon the survivors might meet a fate similar to that of their fellows was not to be told, and as they drifted on and on, down the ice-laden channel, now warding off danger with an oar or a boat-hook, their feelings were none of the best.

"Blow me if I ever go off on another whaling voyage north, south or otherwise," Tom heard Jack Spratt say in the course of the day. "There's too much danger in it, and there isn't such an awful sight of pay. I could make more money as a super at a second-class theater in New York than I could if I followed the sea all my life. Oh, Thalia, muse of the drama, why did I ever forsake you to go a-whaling?"

"Friends, Romans, countrymen! Lend me your ears."

"I come to bury Caesar, not—"

"Ice ahead!" shouted Tom, and Jack brought his oration to an end, looked up sud-

denly, ran out a boat-hook to ward off a big cake that was floating too dangerously near them, and then went on with his musings.

That night the boat was moored alongside the bank, as there was so much drifting ice that it was not considered safe to continue the voyage except in daylight.

In the morning it was found impossible to take any but a course east by north, and on the day following none but a due northern course was open to them, the current being so strong as to force them back whenever they endeavored to keep to the south.

The channel was not wide enough to allow them to do any tacking, and they were therefore forced against their will to take a direction directly opposite to that in which they sought to go.

"If we can only make a little lasting, I won't mind," muttered Cap'n Sam, "provided we can get into open water ag'in an' fin'ly get to the south, but this goin' north all the time goes ag'in me."

One night, when wind and tide and everything else seemed against them, they moored alongside a grounded berg, or what seemed to be such, and composed themselves to sleep, Jack Spratt remaining on watch.

Whether or not Jack got to thinking of the glories of stage life or fell asleep, and so was therefore equally unmindful of his duties in one state as he would have been in the other, we cannot decide, but certain it was that he did not know what he was about.

The consequence was that no one was called to relieve him until the morning, and then the confused fellow found that their berg had left its moorings and had been towing them all night at a rate of about six knots an hour.

There was no help for it, and Cap'n Sam said nothing, particularly as he now saw that there was some chance of making the lasting he required, there being more open water than formerly.

Far to the north there arose a peculiarly-shaped iceberg, and Mr. Hawser declared it to be the one they had formerly seen in their first search for George Underhill.

It was much nearer now, and Tom was willing to swear that there was a ship on top of it, but this idea was too wild to receive credence, although they all admitted that the top of the mass did look like a vessel of some sort.

"We'd better make for the ice on that side, anyhow," suggested Cap'n Sam, "for I guess we can make for the south cluss in ter shore better'n we kin out yer."

It was afternoon, and they were speeding along under sail, when a strange form was suddenly espied running up and down on the icy shore.

"It's a man!" cried Hawser. "See, he's waving a jacket and trying to attract our attention. Hallo, what's that?"

It was the report of a gun discharged by the person on shore, and everybody in the boat became intensely excited.

"It's George, I'll bet anything!" shouted Tom, in a fever of excitement.

"Shouldn't wonder if the boy was right," put in Jinkins, while Jack Spratt began to recite his favorite oration.

"Whoever it is, he's all alone, and we must save him," added Cap'n Sam, thoughtfully, "Run the mainsail up and down once so's to let him know we see him."

This was done, and then the boat was headed directly for the shore, as the line of ice might be called, the men all pulling with a will, thus aiding the sail and increasing their speed one-half.

Nearer and nearer they came, and now the person on the ice became less excited knowing that he would be saved.

"Pears to me he has got George's build," mused the skipper, "but folks looks putty much alike when ye come to dress 'em up in furs. Can't be possible that the boy is livin' arter such a winter as we've had."

"But if that is a ship over there on the ice," persisted Tom, who had all along adhered to the belief that they would ultimately find George, "he must have found it, and of course he has been living there."

"And he had a gun with him when he drifted away," added Hawser, "so that he could shoot bears and foxes."

Nearer and nearer came the icy shores, and then, as Cap'n Sam began to feel a strange thrill creep all over him, the young man on the ice suddenly ran down to the water's verge and a rich, clear voice was heard shouting:

"Cap'n Sam, ahoy! Come ashore! I've good news for you."

"Bless my heart if it ain't George arter all!" roared the skipper.

"Hurrah, boys!" yelled Tom, jumping upon a thwart in so lively a fashion that, were a whale boat an easy thing to capsize, this one would have been swamped to a certainty.

"Ahoy yourself!" shouted the skipper. "Is that you, really an' truly, Georgy, my boy?"

"Yes."

It needed no orders to induce the men to pull with a will, and in a few moments the boat was run alongside and made fast with a boat-hook, the men sprang out, and the lone castaway, whom all but Tom had so long thought dead, was clasped to the honest heart of rough Cap'n Sam in a regular bear's hug.

CHAPTER XVII.

"WELL, well, well, it is Georgy, sure enough," muttered Cap'n Sam, after a few moments of silence, and releasing the young man from his grasp. "Why, you're looking well, my boy— hale and hearty. Where have you been living all the time?"

"In an old ship. You can see it away off to the north, on top of a mound of ice."

"Didn't I tell you so?" shouted Tom, prancing about like one possessed.

"But you haven't given me a chance to tell my news yet," said George after shaking hands with his former companions.

"Well, what is it?"

"I have somebody living with me up in the old ship that you'll be glad to see."

"Got a friend up there, have you? Well, now, that's cheerin', for it's lonesome livin' all by yerself in such a land as this. Who is he?"

"You couldn't guess, could you?"

"No, surely not," uttered the skipper, with a puzzled look. "How should I?"

"The old bark burned since I left, didn't it, and you were obliged to go away? You lost Jessie, too, didn't you, and young Tom fought the Esquimaux like a brick?"

"Why, surely, but how in time did you learn all this, when you haven't been with us for six months?"

"My friend told me part of it, and we saw the light made by the burning vessel, and guessed the rest."

"Your friend!" gasped Cap'n Sam, turning pale. "Why it can't be—" and then he stopped.

"Yes, it is Jessie."

"What!" roared the skipper, "my gal, little Jessie? Is she with ye on the old ship? Hooray!" and the old fellow laughed and danced about to hide the tears which were streaming down his weather-beaten face.

"Yes, your Jessie and mine is with me in the old ship," and George related how he had found the young girl, and told of their life since that time.

"Well, well, if that isn't the most wonderful thing as I ever heard of," muttered Cap'n Sam. "To think I should find both you and Jessie, safe an' sound, an' livin' like two turtle doves in a old ship stuck o' top o' an ice mountain! How fur off do ye judge it to be?"

"Oh, about twenty miles. I haven't been home for two nights, but Jessie is all right, and there's no one to harm her."

"Kin we go all the way to it in the boat?"

"Not all the way, but more than half of it."

"Then we'll start right away this minute, fur I can't lose no time. Well, well, just to think o' it!" and Cap'n Sam wiped his streaming eyes on his rough sleeve, and sniffled, while everybody looked pleased.

The boat was now launched, and all hands set out for the ship, skirting the ice and making good progress.

"It's durn lucky now that we was driven out o' our way," observed the skipper, "fur if we hadn't we shouldn't 've found George nor anybody."

"I can imagine your feelings, sir," remarked Jack Spratt "and can compare them only to that delight which a man experiences when he has made a triumph upon the stage. Oh, the magic realm of the theater! Why did I leave it to come up into these howling deserts? Born to be an actor, I have turned aside from the paths of glory, and am nobody!"

"Think of what I have lost, all through my own folly. Think of the wondrous words I

might have delivered to admiring thousands at fifty cents and a dollar a head. Children in arms not admitted. No peanuts sold in the gallery. The tide in the affairs of men spoken of by Julius Caesar has passed me by, and I am left stranded.

"What a falling off was there. Oh, my countrymen, lend me your ears."

"I come to bury Caesar; the evil that men do lives after them. The good is oft interred with their bones."

"Now cry havoc, and let slip the dogs of war."

"Blow winds and crack your cheeks—rage, blow. Oh, what a rogue and peasant slave am I, Horatio."

"The man that hath no music in himself, nor is not—"

"Great guns, Jack, haven't you got over reciting Shakespeare yet?" cried George. "I've got a copy in the ship that is a hundred and fifty years old. I'll give it to you to read and study up."

"No, George, please don't," said Tom, with such a comical expression that everybody laughed and Jack subsided.

The boat took the party within five miles of the foot of the berg, and was then unloaded and drawn out of the water, being then overturned with the contents beneath, and the sail spread all over it and fastened securely by great blocks of ice.

In this position it would form a *cache* for the provisions, and would be less liable to be disturbed by prowling Esquimaux or bears, or carried away by the tide, care being taken to draw it up sufficiently far from the water to be out of the influence of the currents, which must eventually carry away a good deal of the floe.

Having attended to this duty, all hands now set forth on the march to the old ship, the weather, although cold, being far from disagreeable.

They reached the vessel just at night, and George hurried to the top ahead of his friends, so as to inform Jessie of her father's arrival, and not take her too much by surprise.

She had seen the party at a distance, and was in great fear lest it should prove to be her old enemies the Esquimaux, returning to take summary vengeance upon George for their former defeat.

When she saw George running up in advance of the others, she knew that they were friends, although she did not as yet suspect who they really were.

"I have brought some friends, Jessie," cried George, after the first greetings, "and I know you will be pleased to see them."

"Were the poor fellows wrecked?"

"Their ship was burned, and they were trying to reach the south, but were blown here by adverse winds. It was a lucky chance I met—"

"Georgel!" cried the girl, feverishly. "What is this you tell me? Their ship was burned—these men are my father and his crew!"

"Yes, he is safe, and so is little Tom, your old friend. There are but seven of them, though, and that is all that remains of the crew of the dear old bark."

"I am dying to see my kind old dad again; let me go down to him."

"He will be up here in a minute," and George ran to the rail and fired a shot, which speedily brought all hands up the steps and on board the queer old ruin of former greatness.

The meeting between father and daughter was most affecting, and then, next to Cap'n Sam, Tom came in for the greatest share of attention.

"I have never had a chance to thank you, Tom, for your brave defense of myself the day I was carried away!" cried the young lady, and then she caught the boy by the shoulders and kissed him on both cheeks.

"He's only a little fellow, George," she explained to our hero, "and you mustn't mind," and everybody laughed, while Tom said, with a blush:

"I'm sure I don't, Miss Jessie, and you can do that as often as you like, and as for what I did that day, it was only what anybody ought to have done, and I was only sorry that I wasn't bigger, that I might have driven those ruffians away and not let them carry you off with them."

The sudden arrival of so many guests interfered somewhat with the arrangements on board ship, but all hands were satisfied with almost any accommodation for the night, and

on the next day comfortable quarters were fitted up for everybody.

"Now," declared George, as they all sat at dinner, "there is one thing to be thought of, first of all. Are we going to remain here or are we going to leave and seek a refuge to the southward?"

"Well, I don't fancy the country myself," returned Cap'n Sam. "I've lost my vessel 'nd my fortin', an' more'n half my crew, and I say we ought to get out afore we lose any more. Another winter in the ice'll kill us all with scurvy, even 'f we don't die o' cold. This yer old ship'll have to be broken up an' burned to keep us all warm another season, and then, where are we?"

"The boat will hold us all," added Hawser, "and as soon as the water is clearer we had better embark, and trust to good fortune to reaching Greenland, or running across a whaler who will take us home."

"That's it, sir," observed Jenkins; "but we can stay here a month yet before the ice will be out o' the way enough fur us to venter on these seas in a open boat."

"And until that time we are safe enough here," added George. "Let us settle on our plans first, however, and then it will be plainer sailing."

"We'll get away in a month, then," decided Cap'n Sam, "an' keep straight down the channel into the 'Lantic Ocean. Our chances in goin' away are better than if we stay here."

Every one agreed to this, and it was therefore settled that at the end of a month they should leave the old ship forever.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON a warm, pleasant day in July, the entire party left the ship and turned their faces to the south, beginning a journey that was to prove most eventful, and which to some would end, not in their native land, but in the desolate wilds from which they sought to escape.

The boat had been visited by some of the party several times, and only a few days previous it had been uncovered and made ready for launching as soon as the party was ready to set sail.

The embarkation took place at last, and by the end of the first day the mound of ice with the ship on top was veiled from sight by a thick fog which settled over ice and water, and made it seem as though they were drifting through nothingness, only the dark waters around them being visible.

They had looked upon the old ship for the last time, however, for when next the sun shone out they had drifted too far away to catch even the faintest glimpse of that strange creation—the mound of ice and its ancient burden.

Day after day they sped over the sea, now threatened with destruction by the ice, or in imminent danger of being swamped by the fierce billows, and as each passing day brought no sight of habitable land or of vessels of any kind, their hearts grew more and more weary, until one and all were well-nigh upon the verge of despair.

"We must keep a brave heart," said George, "or we will fail. Dangers are not to be met by fearing them, but by resolving to get the best of them, no matter how great they may be."

"Spoken like a man, George," cried Cap'n Sam, slapping our hero on the back. "That's the kind of stuff to make men of us, pluck 'nd grit 'nd never say die."

Day after day, however, when the fierce winds howled about them, threatening to tear their little sails to ribbons, while wave after wave dashed over them at the imminent risk of sending them to the bottom—when great masses of ice surged by them and were only kept off by the most superhuman efforts—day after day, as they were exposed to a hundred perils, it seemed as though their strength of body and spirit must give out at last, and the elements remain triumphant against the weak efforts of man to battle against them.

At last, far away, they saw the peaks and the low-lying stretches of gray, barren land, which they knew to be the coast of Greenland, and bravely they struggled to reach it, trusting that there they would find some rude shelter, meet with some rough but kindly men, who would assist them to reach some haven where they could at last sail for home.

But as the land drew nearer and nearer

their perils seemed to increase, as though it was not meant that they should escape from the perils which beset them on every hand.

First they were caught in a squall, and the sail was blown away before they could haul it down, the mast being torn from its socket and broken in pieces, one of the fragments striking Smith on the head, and hurling him unconscious into the boiling waves, where he sank out of sight before a hand could be reached out to save him.

Then a huge wave struck the boat, and Jessie was precipitated into the waters, a frightened scream forcing itself from her lips as she sank.

Jackson, another of the sailors, leaped overboard after her, dove deep down into the sea and caught her as she arose.

The brave fellow swam to the boat with his unconscious burden, and battled with death until the girl could be taken on board, but then, chilled through and through, weighted down with his heavy clothes, and taken with a sudden cramp, he threw up his hands, sank beneath the surface as a great mass of ice came floating by, endangering the safety of the boat, and was never seen again.

Jessie was revived and wrapped in extra furs, eventually recovering from the chill received in the icy waters, but the man who had periled his life to save her's was seen no more, and all their hearts were saddened at his loss.

Then, in spite of all their caution, the boat got into a jam of ice, and was badly staved at the bows, it being necessary for all hands to crowd aft in order to keep the water out.

Little Tom, being the lightest, was sent forward to plug up the leaks with the materials easiest at hand, bits of fur, oakum and ends of rope pulled to pieces.

Jenkins next lost the boat-hook in sheering off from a cake of ice, and Jack Spratt caught a crab with his oar and was obliged to let it go or be tumbled overboard.

After this nothing happened for a day or so, and although the boat was leaking, there was no danger of its not keeping afloat until they could effect a landing, although this was not as easy a task as it might have been.

They could only use oars, and these were badly broken, owing to frequent contact with the ice masses, that pulled by Jenkins being almost split in two and George's being but a little better.

At night they drifted along and one morning found themselves not more than a couple of miles from the coast, at a point where there seemed to be a number of houses, the flag-pole in the center of the settlement being plainly visible.

They pulled for the shore, but Jenkins lost his oar, and George broke his so as to render it perfectly useless, the only good ones being pulled by Cap'n Sam, Jack and Hawser.

George and Jenkins relieved the skipper and second mate, while Cap'n Sam steered for the shore, all hands hoping that at last the worst of their troubles were over.

They were caught in an eddy as they approached the gray rocks lining the shore, and the boat swung wildly around, despite their bravest exertions, the breach in the bow being opened, and the water rushing in at a terrible rate.

Jenkins was thrown out by the boat running upon a sunken rock, and at the next moment all shared his fate, the little craft having gone to pieces in the instant.

George seized Jessie and swam to shore, Cap'n Sam helped Tom, and the others struck out for themselves.

When they reached the shore Jenkins was missing, and although they looked long and eagerly for him they did not find the brave fellow, and were reluctantly obliged to give him up for lost.

Then they made for the houses they had seen, hoping to find friends and shelter.

Here again bitter disappointment awaited them.

The settlement had been abandoned, some of the houses were in ruins, and only a few dead bodies in some of them were all the signs of human life to be seen.

Fever had attacked the place, and the inhabitants had fled in terror, leaving their dead behind.

It was a fearful welcome for the poor castaways, and nearly deprived them of the little strength they had left.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE houses found by Cap'n Sam and his friends afforded shelter, if nothing else, and after making a fire in one of them from the rubbish found on the shore and in the other houses, they succeeded in getting dry and warm, and then went to the shore in the hope of finding some of the contents of the boat washed upon the rocks.

Fortunately they recovered some of their provisions—a gun and ammunition enough to last some time, the powder being in a water-tight case and thereby escaping a wetting, a harpoon, an ax, and a couple of oars, besides a blanket or so, but the boat itself had been utterly destroyed, not even the slightest fragment appearing on the shore.

It was a cheerless prospect for our friends, alone on the inhospitable coast of Greenland, with an insufficient supply of food, with shelter, indeed, but with a long journey ahead of them, the end of which they might never reach, but which they must take as their only hope of escape.

Had they been well supplied with provisions, they might have remained in the deserted settlement until the inhabitants returned or some vessel hove in sight, but, under the circumstances, to remain was equally perilous as to endeavor to reach the settlements further down the coast.

"This is the worst yet," muttered Jack Spratt, as he sat by the fire, being now without even the consolation of a pipe. "No grub to speak of, no pipe, no tobacco, no nothing! A pretty come down for the man that might have fired the world with his genius."

"Friends, Romans, Countrymen—I come to bury Cæsar."

The evil that men do lives after them.

You have heard that Cæsar was ambitious. And grievously hath he answered it.

Upon the Supercal I thrice did offer him

A kingly crown, which he did thrice refuse.

Did this in Cæsar seem ambitious?

Oh, what a falling off—"

Jack Spratt suddenly started up and made for the door as a large portion of the roof of the house came down with a crash, barely escaping him.

"What a falling in was there, my countrymen, you had better say," cried Tom, who was uninjured. "A little more, and there would have been nothing for you to grumble at, Mr. Jack Spratt."

Fortunately no one was hurt by the sudden caving in of the roof, for no one had been in the house except Jack and Tom, the others being engaged in exploring the coast.

They speedily returned upon hearing Tom's shouts, and as all their belongings were in the house, they at once set to work digging them out.

This was a perilous task, however, as the remaining portion of the roof soon fell in, carrying with it the sides of the dwelling, built of rough slabs, frozen mud and other refuse.

Besides the difficulty of digging away this mass of rubbish, there was another danger, and this was that the fire, which still burned within on the hearth, might destroy their property, and leave them with nothing upon which to depend during the long and tedious journey which lay before them.

Picking out one of the houses which appeared the strongest, they gathered all the rubbish capable of making a fire, piled it up on the hearth and put a match to it, being the last, by the way, that any of them possessed, so that if this fire should go out there would be no means of building another.

Then leaving Jessie and Tom in the house, Cap'n Sam, George, Jack Spratt and Mr. Hawser—the whole remaining party—set themselves to the task of saving their supplies from the wreck of the ruined hut.

The fire burned away as long as there was anything for it to feed upon, clouds of steam arising from the melting snow and ice which blinded the workers, and frequently drove them away from the scene of their labors.

At last, after a great deal of hard work, they succeeded in reaching the interior of the hut, and dragging out the remains of their supplies.

The blankets had been destroyed by the flames; the cask of meat had been broken by the falling walls, the contents being scorched, mixed with mud and ice and well-nigh ruined; the powder had fallen into the fire and had exploded; the two oars were but charred sticks, and George's supply of wine

from the Ice King—their only hope in case the scurvy attacked them—now lay in a puddle of mud and ice, lost to them forever.

All they could save was the meat, and only a portion of this, but that was better than having nothing whatever, and as they removed it to the house where they had left Tom and Jessie, they were thankful that matters were no worse.

It was now night, and they disposed themselves to rest, lying in a circle around the fire, which had been replenished that it might not go out during the night.

In the morning they made a meal of salt beef, and then went out and gathered every scrap of wood they could lay hands upon, so as to keep the fire going as long as possible.

"Now I'll tell ye what's to be done," said Cap'n Sam. "Leave me here with Jessie, 'nd the rest o' ye go ahead 'nd try to find a ship or human folks, an' then come back. If we all go on we'll never get thar, but if on'y a few does, there'll be more chance."

"Leave you here to perish!" cried George. "No, no, if any one remains, it must be myself."

"No, George, you're young an' vig'rous, an' have better chances. I'm old, an'll be more likely to give out."

"Let Tom stay with me," said Jessie, bravely, "while the rest of you go on ahead. We are less able to stand the fatigue, and we will need less to live upon."

Both George and Cap'n Sam were averse to leaving Jessie behind, but she soon convinced them that if they wished to save her life that was the best means to do it, for she knew she could never stand the fatigue of the long journey on foot.

Little Tom, too, brave as he was, could hardly hope to keep up with the rest of them, and as only by a forced march could anything be accomplished, Jessie's proposition was decided to be the best that could be made.

The salt meat was then made up into five portions, one being somewhat larger than the rest, this being left behind, the others being made into bundles to be carried upon the backs of the rescuing party.

They all set to work and collected every scrap of wood, piling the whole at one side of the one room of the hut, and cautioning Tom to make it last as long as possible, for there was no telling how long they might be gone.

Cap'n Sam and George then bade Jessie an affectionate adieu, and all hands wished Tom and the young girl the best of good luck until they met again, and then came the separation which to some of them would be forever.

The party had neither spy-glass nor compass, fire-arms nor ammunition, an ax and a harpoon being their only weapons, while before them lay a journey of they knew not how many leagues, beset by perils on every hand.

Tom and Jessie stood in the doorway of the hut, and watched them out of sight, when they went in, closed the door, replenished the fire and got dinner ready, neither having any appetite, however, when it was prepared.

"Do you think they will come back, Tom?" asked Jessie, after a long pause, the two being seated, one upon either side of the fire.

"They'll try to, Miss Jessie, but I'm afraid that they won't do it, not all of 'em."

Jessie did not trouble him with further questions, and the two sat engrossed in their thoughts, neither speaking a word for more than an hour.

The night came at last, and both lay down to rest, and so passed the first day of their solitary life, many others succeeding it, with little to break the monotony, both trying their best to be cheerful, but neither succeeding to any great extent.

They took their meals regularly; they went out for a run along the shore every morning and afternoon; they husbanded both food and fuel; they spent the evenings in conversation, and one day was like another, Tom keeping the count by making a mark on the mud wall of the house with a charred stick every morning the first thing after arising. A week passed, and this increased to ten days, to two weeks, to eighteen days, and still there was no sign of the return of the rescuing party.

Despite all their care, the supply of food was nearly exhausted, and as for fuel, Tom had been obliged to go a long way and search under the snow for moss to keep the fire

spoke up his former friend, "even if he is a little cracked on theatricals and thinks he ought've been an actor. I never expected to going, this finally giving out, as well as the food, at the end of the twenty-second day."

"Do you think they will return, Tom?" asked Jessie, for the hundredth time.

"They may," answered Tom, feebly, "but they won't find anything of me but bones. You've got a chance, and you must hold on to it."

"I, Tom? No, we will die together."

"No, for I've been thinking of you, and when I go you'll find meat enough for three or four days under the hearth stone."

"Oh, Tom, you didn't—"

"'Twasn't for myself," said the boy, hastily, misunderstanding Jessie's words. "I saved it out of my share, so that you might have it after I'd gone."

"Oh, Tom, you are a brave boy, and if you die it will break my heart. You must not, you must take some of this food now. You need it more than I do."

"No, no," said Tom, falling back upon the floor where he had been sitting. "Keep it yourself. It'll do me no good, and it will keep you alive."

Then the brave, faithful little fellow sank into a stupor, which seemed like the approach of death itself, and Jessie, falling on her knees beside him, buried her face in her hands and wept as though her heart would break.

CHAPTER XX.

OVER the snow went the four survivors of the Seagull, but upon a forlorn hope, indeed, having little faith that they would be successful, and yet being resolved that they would do all that lay in their power.

Day after day they trudged on over the ice, sleeping at night in snow-banks, in deserted Esquimaux huts, or under the lee of a mass of ice, wrapping themselves up, and lying as close to one another as possible, in order to keep from freezing, for although it was the Arctic summer, the air was still keen at times, and particularly so at night.

They had been out ten days when poor Hawser suddenly disappeared right before their eyes, being carried down a deep abyss which the treacherous snow had concealed.

They heard his last despairing shriek as he disappeared from sight, and George approached the edge of the chasm cautiously, and looked down into the abyss.

He could see nothing, hear nothing, and although he called many times to his lost companion, there was no response save the echo of his own appealing cries.

It was impossible to descend into the chasm either by climbing or by being lowered with a rope, the sides being precipitous, with never a ledge upon which to rest the feet, and the party being without even a single fathom of rope.

The three comrades lingered around the place for some time, in the hope of hearing their friend's voice, but no sound came up from the horrid depths save the echo of their own voices, and that last shriek that poor Hawser had uttered was never followed by any word or sound from the unfortunate whaler.

Seeing that it was useless to remain longer at the scene of their comrade's death, the others made their way around the dangerous spot and continued their journey, taking care to sound every suspicious spot after that, so that there might be no more lives sacrificed to the evil genius of that desolate land.

Two weeks had passed from the time of leaving the deserted settlement, and not a scrap of food remained, the three men being nearly out of their senses with the thought that their labors were in vain, and that those for whom they had taken this perilous journey would perish in spite of all their efforts.

At last, worn out in body and mind, they sank upon the barren shore, in sight of the sea, and gave themselves up to die.

They did not perish, but were found by the

crew of a whaler that was then cruising in those waters, and, being taken aboard, were tenderly cared for and nursed back to life and consciousness.

When at last George recovered his senses, his comrades being still delirious, he asked how long a time had elapsed since he had been found.

"It's just a week day before yesterday," answered the skipper, a jolly tar, who was very well acquainted with Cap'n Sam, although he had not yet recognized him.

"More than a week!" cried George. "Then there is no time to lose. We must save them."

"Save who, youngster? We did save ye, all hands, though the other fellers hasn't come around yet."

"No, no, I mean Jessie and young Tom. We were going ahead to get help for them when we gave out."

Thereupon George related the adventures of himself and friends in the sea of ice, and implored the captain to go after the captain's daughter and the cabin boy, agreeing to direct them to the very spot where they had been left.

"You don't mean to say that that is Cap'n Sam Carter, and that his darter is up there in the ice waitin' for ye to come back? What a pity ye didn't come to sooner. Of course I'll go back. I know Cap'n Sam like a book, and now I come to look at him, I kin see that it is him and nobody else. Go back there? You bet I'll go back."

The vessel's course was at once laid in the direction George indicated, and the honest skipper declared that he knew the deserted settlement well, and that he had visited it during the last season, and that it had already been abandoned at that time.

George worked as hard as did any one aboard the vessel, and in the course of a day or so Jack Spratt recovered his senses, and when he learned whither they were bound, turned to with the rest and never grumbled.

"After all, while the life of an actor is a glorious one," he did finally say, "and although I did miss my chances, there is after all nothing more ennobling than saving the lives of your fellow men—and women," he added, after a pause.

"I say," said a man about Jack's own age, "isn't your name Jack Spratt?"

"It is, but I no not know that I ever saw you—"

"Oh, bother! Don't you know me? You and I used to live in the same street in New York. You wanted to be an actor, and tried being a supe at the Bowery, but you weren't no good, and they wouldn't have you."

"Sir, you are mis—"

"No, I ain't mistaken. I was at the play myself one night when you had to speak two lines, and what did you do but walk right down to the footlights and begin spouting something that wasn't in it at all, something about Julius Caesar and Romans and ears and other rubbish, when the stage-hands shoved on a scene, and the manager sent half a dozen supers to drag you off."

"I'll bet I know what it was that he said," interposed George, with a laugh. "Wasn't it this:

"Friends, Romans, countrymen,
Lend me your ears,
I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him;
The evils that men do lives after them,
The good is oft interred—"

"Yes, yes, that's the whole business," returned the sailor, with a laugh. "Jack Spratt thought he was cut out to be an actor, and was always reading plays and spouting them, but when he came to get into the actual business, he found he was no good and was bounced."

"Oh, Jack Spratt—Jack Spratt!" cried George, with a mock tragic tone. "I did not think that of you. Couldn't even make a supe, never had a word with old Booth, or any of them. Don't ever let me hear any more of Mark Antony, or I'll throw you overboard."

"Oh, well, Jack's a good fellow, anyhow,"

see him way up here, though I ain't surprised to know that he's been working that old Booth racket. He played it on us fellows at home till we all got sick."

"You needn't say any more, Bill," said Jack Spratt. "You've taken away the only subject I had to talk about, and now I might as well give up altogether."

Through the icy waters the whaler plowed her way, and at last the flagstaff and the straggling houses of the deserted settlement came into view, and they hurriedly lowered a boat and pulled for the landing-place, at a point where there was no danger from the whirling eddies.

Cap'n Sam, George, Jack Spratt, the latter's friend Bill, the skipper, and one other man were in the boat, and the oars fairly smoked in the oar-locks as the men rowed hastily ashore.

George set up a shout as they sprang out, and in another instant a boyish-looking form, dressed all in furs, issued from one of the houses, paused an instant, and then fell upon its knees in the snow, with its hands raised to Heaven.

"Tom, Tom, where is Jessie? Is she safe?"

Thus cried George as he hurried forward and caught the kneeling figure in his arms.

"George, don't you know me? Has suffering then changed me so much?"

It was Jessie herself, and not Tom, whom he beheld, and then George remembered that the girl had long since adopted a dress similar to his own, although for one moment he had forgotten it.

Cap'n Sam hurried forward and clasped his daughter to his breast, while George asked eagerly after Tom.

"Poor little fellow," sighed Jessie. "I never saw such a devoted boy—so brave, so faithful. To think of his wanting to die to save me."

"Brave Tom, poor boy. Then we are too late to save him?"

"When all our food had given out, I found that he had saved considerable from his share that I might have it. Think of his dying to save me!"

"Then the poor fellow is dead, is he?" muttered Cap'n Sam. "Well, I'm really sorry, 'cause I liked that boy next to you an' George better'n any one on airth."

"Dead?" cried Jessie. "No, indeed, although he would have died to save me if necessary, and might have, had I not taken care of him. However, I cannot say what would have happened by another day—"

George waited to hear no more, but dashed into the hut, where he found Tom lying upon some soft moss, looking very pale and still, but with his eyes open.

"Tom, you young hero, how can I ever thank you for your brave devotion, for your heroic self-denial?" and George lifted the boy tenderly in his arms and bore him outside.

"It wasn't any more than you'd have done, George," answered the boy, faintly. "And anyhow I would have died if it hadn't been for Jessie. She made me eat, and stood by me through it all. I'm so glad you've come back."

Tom was taken on board the whaler, and all hands returned in the vessel, the reunion of old friends being most touching.

Another day would have finished both Tom and Jessie, but the rescuers had arrived in time, and it was not long before the whole party had been restored to health and strength.

George Underhill now calls pretty Jessie Carter his wife, honest Cap'n Sam has given up the sea and his life as well, Jack Spratt has settled down to spend the rest of his days in peace and quiet, and young Tom, now a man grown, and the devoted friend of George, is first officer on the latter's sturdy ship, which plies between America and China, and brings riches to its owner and captain, who, blessed with wife and children and friends and riches, has no further desire to risk life and fortune

IN THE SEA OF ICE.

[THE END.]

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